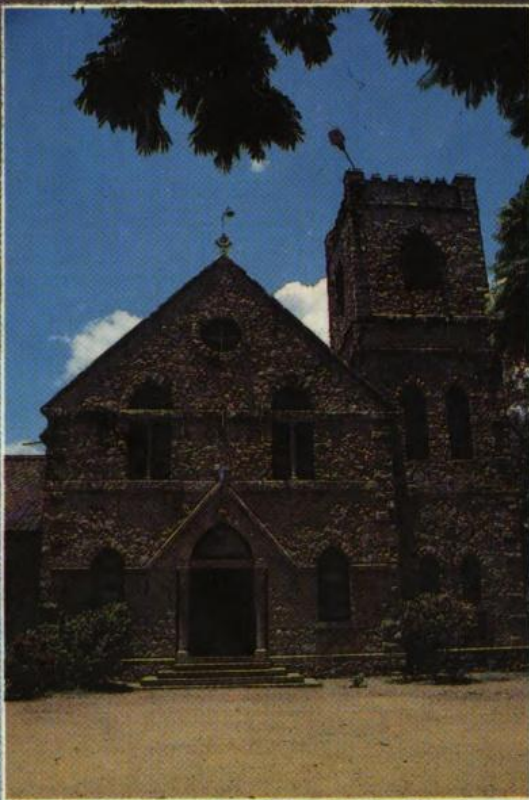


Missionaries
and a *Hindu State*
Travancore 1858–1936



KOJI KAWASHIMA

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| AGG | Agent to the Governor General |
| CAR | <i>Cochin Administration Report</i> |
| Ch.Sec. | Chief Secretary |
| CMS | Church Missionary Society |
| CMSA | Church Missionary Society Archives |
| CRR | Crown Representative Records |
| CWMA | Council for World Mission Archives |
| FR | Fortnightly Report of the AGG |
| G.O. | Government Order |
| KSA | Kerala State Archives |
| LMS | London Missionary Society |
| MPP | Madras Political Proceedings |
| NAI | National Archives of India |
| NNR | Native Newspaper Reports |
| OIOC | Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library |
| PSP | Political and Secret Proceedings |
| Sec. | Secretary |
| SMPAP | <i>Sri Mulam Popular Assembly Proceedings</i> |
| SNDP | Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (Yogam) |
| T&C | Travancore and Cochin |
| TAR | <i>Travancore Administration Report</i> |
| TDC | Trivandrum District Committee, London Missionary Society |
| TGG | <i>Travancore Government Gazette</i> |
| TL | Travancore Letters, London Missionary Society |
| TR | Travancore Reports, London Missionary Society |

Glossary

- agraharam** : a village or street resided by the Brahmins.
- Arattu** : a bathing festival in which the image of Sri Padmanabha was carried to the sea by the Maharaja.
- asan** : a teacher in an indigenous school.
- avarna** : castes outside the varna system.
- Ayurveda** : Hindu system of medicine.
- Bhagavati** : the name of a war goddess and tutelary deity of Travancore and other dynasties.
- Bhajana Mathom** : a place of worship built for the lower castes by the Cochin government.
- devaswom** : religious endowments and property belonging to temples.
- Dewan** : the chief minister.
- kuppayam** : a jacket which was worn largely by Syrian Christians and Muslims.
- Hiranyagarbham** : a ceremony of rebirth, which gave the Maharaja the status of twice-born.
- Illam** : the houses of mainly the Nambudiri Brahmins.
- makkattayam** : a system of patrilineal inheritance.
- Mariamman** : the goddess who was supposed to cause smallpox.
- marumakkattayam** : a system of matrilineal inheritance which prevailed in Kerala.
- Murajapam** : a sexennial ceremony in which Travancore State feasted Malayala Brahmins.
- nadu** : the territory of a chieftain.
- naduvazhi** : the ruler of a *nadu*.

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Padmanabha : another name for Vishnu: the tutelary deity of Travancore.

padiyettam : a ceremony in which a new Maharaja was legitimized as Padmanabha Dasa, a servant of the deity.

punja land : land lying submerged in water.

savarna : caste Hindus.

swamydroham : doing mischief to Padmanabha, or criticizing the Maharaja or the ruling family of Travancore.

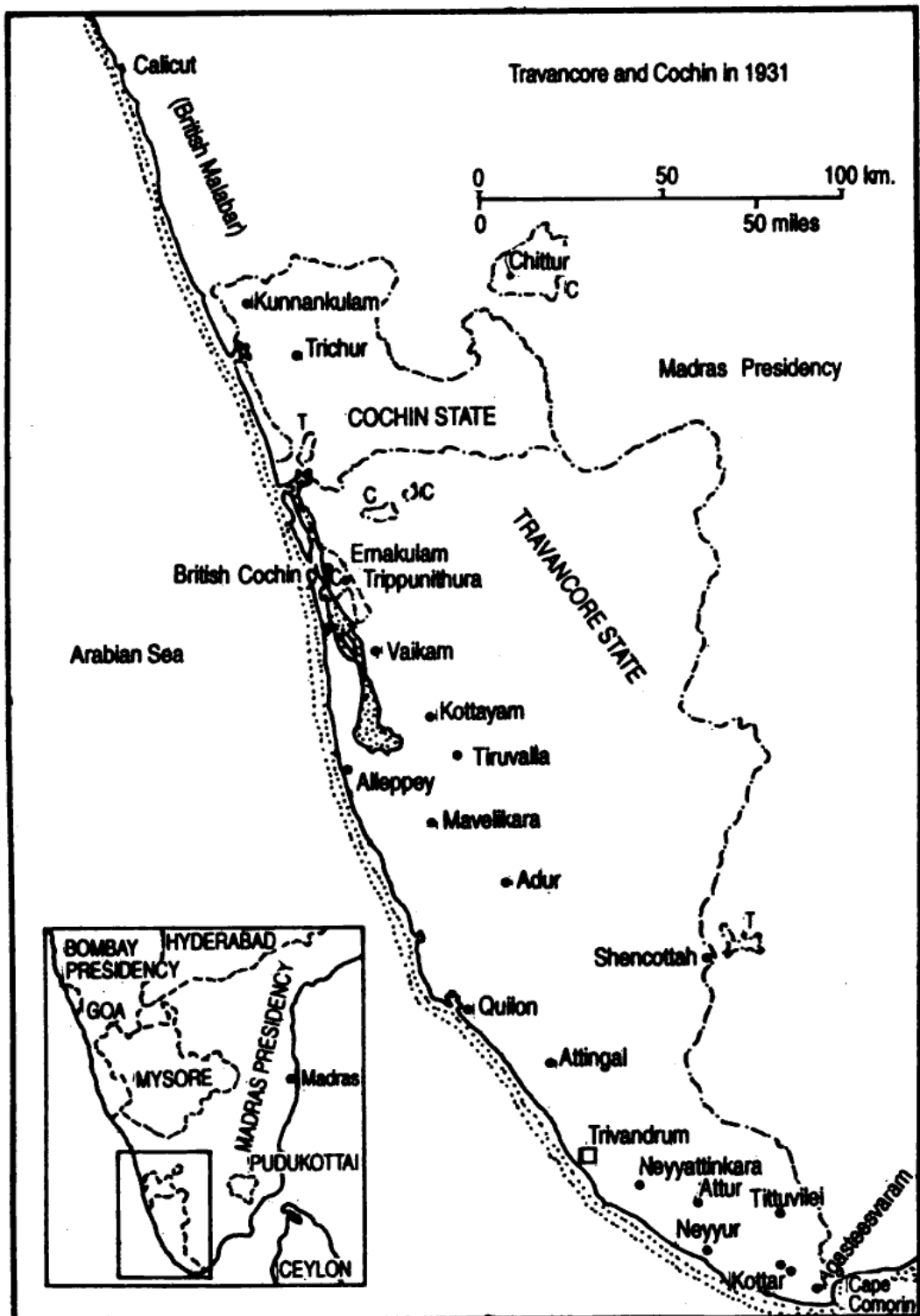
tindal : caste pollution.

Tulapursadanam, or Tulabharam : a ceremony in which the Maharaja was weighed and an equal weight of gold was distributed among Brahmins.

uttupura : a free feeding house for Brahmins.

uriyam : forced labour demanded by the state.

vaidyan : Ayurvedic practitioner.



Introduction

This study seeks to show how, during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a self-declared Hindu state changed itself into a modern state; how the state used Christian missionaries, who had a completely different religious position from itself, during the process of state-building; and how the British authorities were concerned in this process. The main focus of the study is the princely state of Travancore, but the neighbouring state of Cochin is also dealt with to provide a comparative case study.

Hindu Kingship and British Rule

There seems little doubt that British rule in India did not gain as much legitimacy as did the rule of the Indian princes during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The British, who believed that they had a distinct and superior culture and who tended to see their rule in India as a 'civilizing mission', did not, or were not able to, fulfil the divine duties of a Hindu king. In India, the kingly duties have been called *rajadharma*, which can be defined as the obligation of the ruler to protect *dharma*, or to secure peace, prosperity, justice and order in the kingdom. Of these duties, the protection of the gods and their temples was perhaps the most important, and the authority of the Hindu kings was ideologically legitimized by his relationship with the gods and their temples to a large extent.¹ It is true that the British tried to take on the Hindu kings' functions of the protection of the temples. But their authority could not be legitimized by these attempts, and the effort was finally abandoned in 1842 after protests from the Christian

¹C.J. Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 104, 109.

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missionaries.² Conversely, many of the princes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India claimed a divine or semi-divine status as Hindu kings.³

Recent studies have shown how influential the ideology of Hindu kingship has been in colonial and post-colonial India. Pamela Price has examined the two former zamindari 'kingdoms' in colonial south India and has argued that there were 'powerful processes for the continuing evolution of royal symbols and values under colonial rule' and that 'kingly culture still makes its mark in Tamil political discourse'. Thus she criticizes Dirks' argument for the collapse of the political structure of Indian kingdoms under British rule.⁴ Henriette Bugge, investigating the activities of missionaries and Tamil society, has also pointed out the importance of kingly culture, especially the concept of *rajadharma* as an ideology between 'dominant and dominated groups' even in the period of British rule.⁵ Ranajit Guha has also pointed out that 'the idiom of Dharma continued to influence [nationalist] elite political discourse', and that M.K. Gandhi, in particular, overtly used the notion of *dharmaraj* (the rule of dharma) or *Ramraj* (the rule of Rama) as 'a necessary and significant instrument of the struggle against imperialism'.⁶ Even today, the notion that the ideal state is Rama's kingdom, the *Rama-rajya*, is still influential among Hindus, and it is strongly publicized by the Bharatiya Janata Party.⁷

Thus, in Indian political culture, kingship seems to have played a certain role during the British period, and clearly, as has been noted before, the Indian princes were in a more advantageous

²Fuller, *Servants of the Goddess*, p. 109; Arjun Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule: A South Indian Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 105, 163; D.A. Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 184–5.

³Adrian C. Mayer, 'Rulership and Divinity: The Case of the Modern Hindu Prince and Beyond', *Modern Asian Studies*, 25, 4 (1991), p. 775.

⁴Pamela G. Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 4–6, 192, 201.

⁵Henriette Bugge, *Mission and Tamil Society: Social and Religious Change in South India, 1840–1900* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1994), pp. 157, 165, 175.

⁶Ranajit Guha, 'Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VI* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 246–7.

⁷C.J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (New Delhi: Viking, 1992), p. 107.

position for the role than the British. The princely states undoubtedly represented a more indigenous development of Indian politics and society at least in this respect. Although they were not totally independent or autonomous units, British intervention was not complete, and its intensity and nature changed considerably, as will be seen in this study. In this respect, the history of the princely states can be viewed as an example of an alternative course of Indian history under British rule, or during the period of modernization and state-building.

However, scholars have not paid much attention to this aspect. Instead, the princely states have, with some exceptions, tended to be seen only as 'corrupted' and 'despotic' political units or as mere collaborators of the British. It is probably true that many states were 'corrupted' and 'autocratic'. However, it should be noted that these perceptions were also the dominant views of the British colonialists. Lord Curzon (Viceroy, 1899–1905) referred to the princes as 'a set of unruly and ignorant and rather indisciplined schoolboys'.⁸ Undoubtedly, to describe non-Europeans as children or childlike was one of the features of Orientalism.⁹ As Gyanendra Pandey has pointed out, British colonialism regularly represented Indians 'as the primitive Other',¹⁰ and there seems no doubt that this tendency has more or less distorted perceptions and historical evaluations towards the princely states.

In any case, the princely states have been frequently seen as the degraded Other of India. It is perhaps for this reason that attention was generally paid only to the process in which western elements were introduced into or diffused in these areas. In other words, the interaction between westernization and more indigenous and legitimized political systems has not been adequately examined. Therefore, we should investigate the way in which the Indian princely states, as a more legitimized political entity, encountered, assimilated, utilized and resisted westernization and 'modernization' as well as imperialism. This study attempts to examine this question by paying attention to the relationship between the self-

⁸Quoted in S.R. Ashton, *British Policy towards the Indian States, 1905–1939* (New Delhi: Selectbook Service Syndicate, 1985), p. 24.

⁹Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 40.

¹⁰Gyanendra Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness', in David Arnold and David Hardiman (eds), *Subaltern Studies VIII* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 195.

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declared Hindu state of Travancore, Christian missionaries and the British paramount power.

Travancore State and Indirect Rule

Travancore was situated at the south-western extremity of India. The total area was 7091 square miles, which was slightly smaller than Wales. In 1931 it had a population of 5,095,973, of which about 84 per cent spoke Malayalam and 15 per cent Tamil. In 1956 the Malayalam-speaking areas were finally merged into today's Kerala State, and the Tamil areas became parts of Tamilnadu State. Travancore was one of the larger of India's many princely states.¹¹ As such, it had its own Maharaja but was indirectly ruled by the British. In 1795 the East India Company extracted a treaty of subsidiary alliance from Travancore. Under this treaty, the British offered military support to Travancore in return for a tribute called a 'subsidy'. Following this, in 1800, the first British Resident was sent to Travancore, and thereafter the advice of the Resident played an important role in making government policy in Travancore.

Although no adequate explanations have yet been given by historians as to why the British decided to rule certain parts of India directly and others indirectly, indirect rule, which affected about two-fifths of the Indian subcontinent, had several advantages for the British. Perhaps the greatest and most obvious advantage was that, as Michael Fisher has recently pointed out, indirect rule cost much less than direct rule. In particular, the 'number of Europeans drawing salaries, pensions, and benefits ... were far less in indirect rule than in direct rule'.¹² At the same time, British economic interest was not much hindered by the absence of direct colonial rule. In many of the indirectly ruled states, including Travancore and Cochin, European firms managed substantial commercial undertakings. Further, after Indian nationalism emerged in British India in the late nineteenth century, it was believed that indirect rule tended not to generate such powerful nationalist movements

¹¹Mysore and Hyderabad were the other major princely states in south India. With regard to them, James Manor wrote *Political Change in an Indian State: Mysore, 1917–1955* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977), and Bharati Ray wrote *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy, 1858–1883* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹²Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1857* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 8.

as were to be found in British-run territories.¹³ In any case, indirect rule was an indispensable apparatus for the British Empire which ruled not only vast areas of India but also other parts of Asia and Africa in this manner. In fact, apart from the princely states in India, all or parts of Malaya, the Persian Gulf, Zanzibar, the South Pacific islands, Nigeria and the Cameroons were ruled indirectly.¹⁴

What differences, then, did indirect rule make to the society, politics and economy of India? This question, again, has not been adequately answered. However, at least in terms of the legitimacy of the regime, as has been noted before, there was undoubtedly a difference. The concept of divine kingship and the duties of the kings, *rajadharma*, ideologically legitimized the authority of the Hindu kings. In fact, the Maharaja of Travancore, like many other princes, made a clear claim to divine status. In Travancore, a god called Sri Padmanabha was declared to be the real ruler of the state, and the Maharaja was constitutionally defined as the servant of the tutelary deity. This ideological apparatus worked well. Regarding the authority and divinity of the Maharaja of Travancore, one army officer of the East India Company, who was conducting the operations to repress a rebellion in Travancore against the British, wrote to the Madras government in 1809 that 'the institutions and manners of the people differ much from those of the Carnatic [east coast] people. [They] look up to the Rajah with a degree of respect, bordering on devotion'. The officer continued: 'that ancient relations of the two Governments [of Madras and Travancore] are to be re-established will I am confident produce the most conspicuous result to our operations'.¹⁵ The Madras government 'entirely' approved his view.¹⁶

Generally, the firmness of the regime of the prince was one of the criteria when the British considered the annexation of a princely state. In other words, the British tended to annex the states in which the legitimacy of the state was weak. In 1800 the Nawab of Arcot was forced to cede his territory to the Madras government because

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 8, 23, 461.

¹⁵Lt. Col. Sentleger to the Ch. Sec., 13 Feb. 1809, Tinnevely Collectorate Records, vol. 3569, Tamilnadu Archives.

¹⁶G. Buchanan, Ch. Sec., to Sentleger, 22 Feb. 1809, Tinnevely Collectorate Records, vol. 3569, Tamilnadu Archives.

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of the weakness of the regime.¹⁷ Also, there is no doubt that the 'doctrine of lapse', which Dalhousie (Governor-General, 1848–56) used to annex a number of princely states, was effective, because usually there was more confusion regarding the legitimacy of a regime when no direct heirs were present to resist such annexation. At least in part because of its firmly established legitimacy as a Hindu state, Travancore continued to avoid annexation not only in 1809 but throughout the remaining years of its history up to 1947. In any case, this aspect of political legitimacy grounded in religion was clearly the great difference between the princely states and British India, and one of the main purposes of the study is to add some knowledge to this area by examining how the state maintained the divinity and authority of the Maharaja and how the ideology of the Hindu state functioned and changed. In particular, the nature of the state is investigated through its interaction with Christian missionaries, largely because its character can be more clearly seen in relation to institutions which vigorously propagated a completely different religion.

The Change in Travancore Society and Politics

The period with which this study mainly deals is from 1858 until 1936. This is largely because the society and politics of Travancore changed considerably during this period. In particular, from the late nineteenth century onwards, great changes occurred in caste and communal identities as well as in the relationship between the missionaries and the political authorities, and the period which this study covers is considered essential to explain the changes. In the year 1858 Sir T. Madava Row, a renowned Indian administrator, was formally appointed Dewan of Travancore and began to make energetic efforts to modernize the state. His efforts to introduce a number of reforms into the administration of the Travancore government, together with growing commercialization and improved communications, helped transform Travancore. As Robin Jeffrey has pointed out, the Izhavas and Syrian Christians took great advantage of a commercializing economy and became increasingly affluent, while the once-overwhelming dominance of the Nayars gradually declined. Land was transferred

¹⁷C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 93.

from the Nayers to the Izhavas and Christians, and a variety of castes and communities began to demand more jobs in the modernized administration, challenging the monopoly of the Nayers and the Brahmins.¹⁸

One of the trends of modern South Asian historiography has been to deny the view that Indian society was static and unchanged until the British Raj intervened to destroy what was formerly seen as 'the feudal base of Indian society'.¹⁹ Recently much work has been done to show how, well before 1800, Indian villages were influenced by the development of commercialization and how a variety of groups were in competition for a higher status in the relatively fluid system of caste and social hierarchy.²⁰ It has become clear that Indian society before the British Raj was far more dynamic than was formerly recognized. In this sense, Jeffrey's statement about Travancore—made in 1976—about 'a society which had survived fundamentally unchanged for 700 years', now appears open to considerable doubt.²¹

However, it is equally true that the social, economic and political changes which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century were more widespread and deeper than those previously experienced. In particular, in terms of caste and communal movements, it should be noted that almost all the castes and communities participated in the movements in Travancore. Even the lowest castes, such as the Pulayas and the Parayas, formed caste associations and demanded fairer treatment from the state and the higher castes.

But what was the nature of these new movements? Susan Bayly has pointed out that the Izhava movement for temple-entry in the 1920s and 1930s was 'a classic south Indian honours dispute', and further argued that 'in almost all these cases the basic principles were the same: the participants were seeking to enhance their ritual status and honour...'.²² However, almost every movement from the

¹⁸Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847–1908* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), pp. 249, 265–9.

¹⁹A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 26.

²⁰For example, see David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

²¹Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 265.

²²Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 448.

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late nineteenth century onwards demanded the right of education—something which had been impossible previously. The lower castes demanded more opportunities for education because they believed that education was an important means of social mobility. Before at least 1800, education was imparted in indigenous schools, and it had nothing to do with social mobility because most occupations were hereditary. Even though the demand for education was expressed in terms of 'traditional categories', i.e. caste or community, the basic principle underlying it seems to have been very individualistic and 'modern'.

Of course, the caste and communal movements from the late nineteenth century onwards shared some characteristics with previous movements. But they simultaneously had some different elements as well, and the spread of the movements was much wider and deeper than previous ones had been. And this was largely the result of massive social, political and economic changes in the second half of the nineteenth century. This study finishes in the year 1936, when the Temple Entry Proclamation was issued in Travancore to enable the lower castes to enter most temples in the state. This was one of the principal results of the changes brought about since the late nineteenth century and, more broadly, of the modernization of the state which Madava Row enthusiastically started in 1858.

The State and the Missionaries

Several scholars have written about Travancore State and missionary activities. But their works have failed to explain the very complex nature of the relationship between the state and missionary activities, largely because they have regarded the roles of the political authorities and the missionaries as more or less fixed rather than dynamically changing. In his book *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, Robin Jeffrey has argued that the social and economic changes which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century made Syrian Christians and some *avarna* castes (non-caste Hindus) wealthy and assertive and that, as a result, the dominant position of the Nayers was greatly challenged and became unstable. In his argument, the activities of the missionaries were one of the principal factors that promoted this change. In other words, the missionaries were prepared to 'challenge' Travan-

core State, and the state strove to conciliate them.²³ However, as will be seen in this study, the missionaries and the state much more frequently co-operated than clashed, and the state at times even expected the missionaries to play a role in persuading the low-caste Christians to be obedient to the existing order. Jeffrey's argument seems unable to explain these aspects of their relationship.

In addition, in his view, the attitude of the British authorities also seems to be a very fixed one. Certainly, he has examined the relationship between Travancore State and the British authorities in another article, and there he has suggested four types of relationship. But he is clearly assuming that the interest of the British was always in 'modernizing' Travancore or keeping the state 'fairly closely in step with British administration and ideas'.²⁴ He has not paid enough attention to the fundamental changes in British attitude towards Travancore, which clearly occurred from the late nineteenth century onwards, and the meaning of the changes accompanied by Lord Minto's well-known Udaipur speech of 1909, which openly declared a British policy of 'non-interference in the internal affairs of Native States'.²⁵ The trend towards non-interference has not been sufficiently considered.

Moreover, Jeffrey has almost totally ignored the importance of state rituals and the religious functions of the Maharaja. He seems to consider that these 'traditions' were merely the remnants of the declining and increasingly irrelevant pre-modern system. On the contrary these rituals and the ideology associated with them functioned very effectively in Travancore during this period, even though the state had to adopt some 'democratic' measures to reinforce its legitimacy, as we shall see in Chapter 1. In a sense, Travancore State attempted to modernize itself by using such rituals and associated ideology to secure more effective legitimacy for the regime. Resistance to the introduction of modern administration, for example, would be greatly lessened if people knew that the

²³Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance* pp. 83, 265.

²⁴Robin Jeffrey, 'The Politics of "Indirect Rule": Types of Relationship among Rulers, Ministers and Residents in a "Native State"', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 8, 3 (1975), pp. 262, 275.

²⁵Quoted in D.A. Low, 'Laissez-faire and Traditional Rulership in Princely India', in Robin Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 374.

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Maharaja himself initiated the reform, and it thus carried the weight of his semi-divine authority. Modernization, while maintaining an essentially Hindu character, was the underlying official policy repeatedly expressed by the Travancore government. Also, it was partly for this reason that the British became very careful in intervening in the domestic affairs of Travancore when Indian nationalism emerged. In other words, the British tried to prevent the development of Indian nationalism in the princely states by keeping the people loyal to their traditional rulers. Overt British intervention in these states was considered dangerous because it might stimulate anti-British feeling, as this study shows.

Turning to other writers, Dick Kooiman has pointed out, in his book on the London Missionary Society in Travancore, several important facts, such as the class background of the missionaries and the similarities between 'Christianization' and Sanskritization. But he too has failed to pay enough attention to the changing aspects of the missionaries' relationship with political authorities. It is true that he has described some stages of the relationship between the missionaries and colonial authorities. But his interest seems to last only till the 1850s.²⁶ Moreover, he seems to assume that the relationship depended mostly on the personal attitude of the British Residents. He has written that 'Not all Residents had the same sympathy with the work of the mission. Yet generally, the local British officials responded favourable to missionary appeals and initiatives, giving the LMS a position of some influence and making the local people view the mission as an authority close to officialdom yet much more accessible'.²⁷ But this study deals with some rather fundamental changes in British attitudes. In particular, it seeks to show that, as has been noted, there was a trend towards non-interference and that it became increasingly difficult for the missionaries to expect some support from the British authorities.

J.W. Gladstone is another contributor to the history of the missionaries in Travancore. He has argued that the conversion movements in Kerala were 'the conscious attempts of certain sections of the people for their emancipation', and that the missionaries and the British authorities were the agents which promoted that

²⁶Dick Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India: The London Missionary Society in South Travancore in the 19th Century* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989), pp. 26–32, 145–7.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 198.

'emancipation'.²⁸ I will raise some doubts in Chapter 5 as to whether the conversion of the lower castes can be understood as efforts for their 'emancipation' or not. But, apart from this, his view of the roles of the missionaries and the British authorities is also static and fixed. It is partly for this reason that the relationship between the missionaries and Travancore State is seen to be only confrontational in his argument. He asserts that 'the Travancore Government and its officials could not reject the plea of the missionary completely, because of his connection with the British political authorities'.²⁹ Contrary to Gladstone and other previous studies, this study seeks to show that the relationship between the missionaries, Travancore State and the British authorities changed greatly over time mainly from the late nineteenth century onwards largely as a result of the growing influence of Indian nationalism, religious revivalism, and caste and communal movements.

Outline of the Study

This study examines the political and social evolution of Travancore and (to a lesser extent) Cochin, and economic change and commercial development during the period is not directly dealt with here. This is not because I think that the economy is unimportant to an understanding of Travancore society, but because economic change in the second half of the nineteenth century has been studied fairly extensively by other scholars, especially Robin Jeffrey.³⁰ Therefore, this study pays attention to a less explored area—the political relationship between the missionaries, the state and the British authorities.

Chapter 1 examines the nature of the Hindu state and its efforts to maintain its legitimacy as a Hindu state as well as to modernize itself as a 'model state'. The chapter looks at the state's relationship with the British authorities and their influence over policy-making

²⁸J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and People's Movements in Kerala: A Study of Christian Mass Movements in Relation to Neo-Hindu Socio-Religious Movements in Kerala, 1850–1936* (Trivandrum: Seminary Publications, 1984), pp. 421–2.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 203.

³⁰Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, chapters 3 and 4. For land reform and agrarian change, see T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala, 1850–1960* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1970) and M.A. Oommen, *Land Reforms and Socio-economic Change in Kerala* (Madras: CLS, 1971).

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processes in Travancore. Chapter 2 investigates the relationship between Christian missionaries and the British authorities. In particular, it can be seen that, for a variety of reasons, the British became very reluctant to intervene in social and religious matters in Travancore from the late nineteenth century onwards, and that the missionaries practically lost their support. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the development of education and medicine in Travancore, as case studies of both modernization and mission-state relations. In particular, it is shown that the two sides actively co-operated in these matters, despite differences in their religious positions.

Chapter 5 investigates government policy towards the lower castes and shows that the state was concerned about the movements of the lower castes for two main reasons. One was to prevent conversion; and the other was to maintain the social and economic order which the lower castes had supported largely as agricultural labourers. We will see how the missionaries were used by the state to achieve the latter aim. Finally, the case of Cochin is dealt with in Chapter 6. This chapter seeks to show that missionary activities were far less successful in Cochin, and partly for this reason, the process of modernization was considerably delayed in Cochin compared with Travancore.

The Nature and Problems of Source Materials

The source material used in this study largely consisted of government and missionary records. The government source materials were mainly the Madras Political Proceedings, Crown Representative Records, and Political and Secret Department Papers. These sources include the correspondence between the British Resident and the British authorities in Madras, Calcutta, Delhi and London. They also contain letters from the Dewans of Travancore and other officials in the Travancore government. As to the records of the Travancore government, in 1992 the permission of the Kerala State Archives to read the documents produced before 1917 was not available because of their 'brittle' condition. As a result, only the records classified as 'Confidential Files' are used for this study. They mainly include the correspondence between the Chief Secretary to the Travancore government and other government officials.

What is the value of these government sources? Perhaps the greatest value is that they reveal, to a great extent, how a certain

policy was devised and pursued by the Travancore government or by the British governments in Madras, Calcutta (or, later, Delhi) and London. The Residents had easy access to the Dewans and the Maharajas, and therefore their reports contain reliable views of the ministers and the rulers. As to the British authorities, these sources include the documents of the Madras government, the Government of India and the India Office. Thus, they are of course of great help in investigating British attitudes towards Travancore. However, one of the major problems of these sources is that they were mostly written by higher officials and, as a result, they do not contain enough information about the attitudes and views of non-official Indians. Therefore, I used the Native Newspaper Reports, which contain articles from a number of newspapers published in Travancore, Cochin and the Madras Presidency. These are particularly useful in the attempt to establish the views of the Indian middle classes. Also, the government sources barely comprise any information about what was happening at the village level or about the very low castes. In this sense, the missionary sources, which will be mentioned next, were able to provide some useful information.

The missionary sources used in this study were largely found at the Council for World Mission (formerly the London Missionary Society) Archives in the library of SOAS and the Church Missionary Society Archives in Birmingham University. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre in London also preserves some records on the activities of this religious organization in Travancore. Although original letters and reports have been lost, some printed reports preserved there provide important sources for the history of the Salvation Army in Travancore. In addition, the libraries of the United Theological College at Bangalore and of the CMS (Church Missionary Society) College at Kottayam preserve some printed sources which are rarely available in other places.

What is the value of the missionary sources? Perhaps the most important point is, as has been noted, that they contain a great deal of information about certain localities as well as the lower castes or untouchables. As G.A. Oddie has pointed out, the missionaries, unlike government officers, spent 'many more years in the one locality and, generally speaking, had more extensive first-hand

knowledge of local conditions'.³¹ In particular, since the majority of the Christian converts were from the lower castes, the missionaries paid great attention to these castes, while the political authorities largely ignored them. In addition, missionary sources also reflect some ideological trends in society, including religious revivalism and Indian nationalism. Missionaries were certainly sensitive to the attitudes of the Hindus, especially those of the higher castes. This was not only because the higher castes were an important target of their proselytizing activities, even though converts from them were very few, but also because anti-missionary feelings, which were frequently accompanied with religious revivalism and nationalism, could become a threat to missionary activities. They even became a real threat to their own safety at times. Accordingly, the missionaries tended to record these trends in society.

Further, their sources reveal the attitudes of the political authorities towards religion, social customs, the lower castes and the missionaries themselves. Basically, it was necessary for missionaries to have a favourable relationship with the political authorities, as will be argued at length in this study. They needed permission to work in the princely states, and not all the princely states permitted their activities nor were the British authorities always friendly towards them. In addition, they undoubtedly needed government protection to work among a 'heathen' population, which was potentially hostile to their activities. Also, more practically, the missionaries were seldom entirely self-financing and needed large sums of money in the form of government grants to run their schools and hospitals. Thus, to maintain a favourable relationship with the political authorities was definitely a necessity for them. Consequently, they had to pay great attention to government attitudes and shifts in policy.

But how should we deal with the biases of the missionaries and their records? Regarding this matter, Robin Jeffrey has stated that 'Their biases, because they are generally so glaring, rarely detract from the usefulness of their accounts of events'.³² But it might be useful to consider their biases in more detail. Perhaps the greatest problem in their sources is that they tended to exaggerate certain

³¹G.A. Oddie, *Hindu and Christian in South-East India* (London: Curzon Press, 1991), p. 6.

³²Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. xi.

aspects of Indian society as well as their own activities. On the one hand, the missionary had, to be sure, 'an attitude of moral superiority and a belief in his own exclusive righteousness'.³³ Consequently, as Dick Kooiman has pointed out, they tended to see Indian society through their 'heavily biased' views such as 'dark heathenism' and 'evil habits and barbarious customs'.³⁴ Thus, their reports are likely to lose sight of the actual and more comprehensive functions of certain matters in the society. On the other hand, they had to prove that their activities were worthwhile in order to justify the spending of large sums of money which were largely raised by donations and subscriptions in Britain and other places. Accordingly, the historian has to be aware that they might have reported their activities as being more successful than they actually were. Therefore, in order to examine Indian society more correctly and comprehensively, we have to be very careful when we deal with missionary sources. However, despite these problems, missionary sources are, from the perspective of this study, an exceptionally rich source, a partial corrective to government source materials and a valuable means of gaining access to local-level changes in the society and politics of India.

³³K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1448-1498* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p. 297.

³⁴Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India*, p. 5.

Chapter 1

Travancore State and British Paramountcy

Introduction

Travancore State had two distinctive features. While it was known as a Hindu state which had preserved a purely Hindu nature, it was also called a model state ruled by 'enlightened' Maharajas. These two features, in some ways contradictory, in others complementary, formed the basis for the policies of this princely state. The Maharajas and Dewans consciously pursued these two goals, and they largely succeeded in their efforts. However, Travancore was under the supervision of the Madras government, and therefore the state had to accept its 'advice' through the British Resident. The policy of the Travancore government was thus considerably influenced by the attitudes and policies of the paramount power as well. In this chapter, first the nature of the Hindu state and its change will be examined; and then how the 'enlightened' policy came to be adopted by the Maharajas and Dewans. Finally, by examining the process by which some Dewans were selected, the relationship between the Maharajas, the Dewans and the paramount power will be investigated.

Travancore as a Hindu State

Travancore was known as a 'purely Hindu state'. That was mainly because, unlike other parts of India, the area had not come under Muslim rule and therefore retained its 'ancient Hindu type and character'. This notion of an unconquered Hindu state was repeatedly expressed throughout its history.¹ But what constituted a Hindu state?

¹For example, Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1906), vol. III, p. 525; SMPAP, 1st Meeting, 1904, p. 3; The Maharani told a European guest in the 1930 that 'As a race we have never been conquered. The Moghuls who overran Northern India did not come as far south as Travancore, so we have never had to submit to purdah. The Hindu women have never known the veil'. Rosita Forbes, *India of the Princes* (London: Book Club, 1939), p. 213.

Or which factors comprised the Hindu nature of Travancore? Undoubtedly, the dedication of the state to Sri Padmanabha, the local appellation of Vishnu, was one of the most important factors. This dedication was initiated by Maharaja Martanda Varma in 1750. When Martanda Varma (Maharaja, 1729–58) ascended the throne of Travancore, which was then called Venad, it was one of the nadus or principalities in today's Kerala. What Martanda Varma aimed to do was to strengthen his power by crushing the 'feudal' elements within his kingdom and, at the same time, to expand its border by conquering the neighbouring chieftains.² As K.M. Panikkar has pointed out, the Maharaja clearly wished to found an autocratic state. For this purpose, he introduced efficient weapons which he purchased from English merchants and built an army comprised of the Maravers and Nayars. The Maharaja also employed a Flemish officer called Captain D'-Lanoy.³

There is no doubt that Martanda Varma adopted very radical and harsh measures to change the existing political order. In 1733, for example, he killed the sons of the previous raja and captured other 'rebel leaders'. Forty-two of them were hanged. Their property was confiscated and their women and children were made out-castes. Several Brahmins of the 'rebels' were exempted from the execution, according to the laws of Manu, but were also made out-castes with their foreheads branded with the figure of a dog.⁴

After capturing and executing the 'rebel leaders', he absorbed Attingal, and other neighbouring nadus. He extended his kingdom to the frontiers of Cochin by 1757 when he concluded a treaty of alliance with Cochin against the Zamorin of Calicut.⁵ In addition, Martanda Varma introduced a number of reforms into his administration. He organized a new public service based on efficiency and loyal service so as to prevent the monopoly of certain families. The village and district administration was also reorganized and a

²A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History* (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1967), p. 221; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 249.

³K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala, 1498–1801* (Annamalainagar: The Annamalai University, 1960), pp. 234–8; p. Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times* (1878, reprinted New Delhi: AES, 1985), pp. 118, 136–7.

⁴Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 125.

⁵Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, pp. 231–7; Padmanabha Menon, *A History of Kerala* (1929, reprinted New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1983), vol. 2, p. 23; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 249.

regular survey of the land was undertaken for the first time. He also declared the pepper trade a state monopoly in 1743.⁶ Thus he radically challenged the existing order by introducing a number of reforms as well as by expanding his territory. Under these circumstances, he needed to establish his authority on a more rigid basis. For this purpose, Martanda Varma 'invented' or revived a variety of rituals and ceremonials.⁷ The dedication of the state to Sri Padmanabha, the tutelary deity of his family, was certainly the most important of the rituals.

On 17 January 1750, Martanda Varma, accompanied by the royal family and the Dalawah (chief minister), proceeded to the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Trivandrum and declared that he was the vassal of the deity from that day onward. Thus, he assumed the title of Sri Padmanabha Dasa, servant of Sri Padmanabha, and this title was thereafter adopted by every Maharaja in the ceremony of *padiyettam*, in which a new Maharaja did a full prostration and laid his sword on the platform in the temple. This sword was carried to the sanctum by a priest and, after being consecrated, was returned to the Maharaja.⁸ The sword became a symbol of his status and power, and he was then invested with the title of 'Sri Padmanabha Dasa'. This relationship between the Maharaja and Sri Padmanabha was never 'lost sight of by his successors',⁹ and as late as in 1944, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Dewan, 1936–49) stated that 'the Maharaja of Travancore is the Viceroy administering the State, and the Deity is the Ruler of Travancore'.¹⁰

However, it was not a unique feature of Travancore that the Maharaja served a deity as his servant. In fact, all ruling families

⁶A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, 'The Administration of Travancore in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, 2, 4 (1975), pp. 425–36.

⁷As Eric Hobsbawm and others have pointed out, many of the traditions which were considered very ancient in their origin were invented comparatively recently: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993, first published 1983). This matter will be dealt with later in this chapter.

⁸Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 171; Adrian C. Mayer, 'Rulership and Divinity: The Case of the Modern Hindu Prince and Beyond', *Modern Asian Studies*, 25, 4 (1991), pp. 771–3.

⁹SMPAP, 1st meeting, 1904, p. 3.

¹⁰P.G. Sahasranama Iyer, *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1945), p. 286.

in India had tutelary deities, and they were certainly used in similar ways to give an aura of divinity and authority to the rulers.¹¹ This meant that 'By being the greatest servant of the sovereign deity, the human king sustains and displays his rule over men'.¹² What distinguished Travancore from many other princely states was that the relationship was formally established in a constitutional sense by openly declaring the dedication and repeating it publicly.

This measure appears to have been widely known and highly successful. Shungoony Menon wrote in 1878 that 'since that time [i.e. 1750] the people of Travancore have had a devoted attachment and sacred regard for the royal house, and this has continued unchanged up to this day'.¹³ In 1937, Mahadev Desai, secretary to M.K. Gandhi, also wrote that 'I suppose every child in Travancore knows that the Maharajas in Travancore are known as Padmanabhadas'.¹⁴ Under these circumstances, criticizing the Maharaja or the ruling family was regarded as *swamydroham*, doing mischief to the deity.¹⁵ In fact, it was quite rare for the Maharajas themselves to be criticized regarding their policies. Even the missionaries did not openly criticize the Maharajas,¹⁶ and those who were criticized were the Dewans and not the Maharajas who selected the Dewans. In other words, one of the principal functions of the Dewan was to be a buffer which protected the Maharaja from criticism. P. Rajagopalachari (Dewan, 1907-14) stated in his note on administration that 'it is an accepted maxim that it is not competent to any person or authority to go behind any particular order, and to enquire whether the Dewan had taken His Highness's sanc-

¹¹Mayer, 'Rulership and Divinity', p. 770; C.J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (New Delhi: Viking, 1992), p. 107.

¹²Arjun Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 51.

¹³Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 171.

¹⁴Mahadev Desai, *The Epic of Travancore* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Karyalaya, 1937), p. 55.

¹⁵Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 171; *droham* means 'injuring'.

¹⁶Rev. John Cox, an LMS missionary, was certainly one of the few exceptions. He wrote in 1857 that 'His Highness ... has shown that he too far coincides with the unfavourable views of the Dewan, and he has even expressed his great concern at the increase of Missionaries in late years and their dispersion over the country...', John Cox, *Travancore: Its Present Ruin Shown and the Remedy Sought, in a Correspondence with the Government of Madras in the Years 1855-1857* (Nagercoil: LMS Press, 1857), p. C9.

tion to it or not', though 'every matter of any importance has to go up to His Highness and has to receive his approval before an order of the Darbar [government] issues'.¹⁷

As a servant of Sri Padmanabha, the Maharaja of Travancore observed a number of rituals, most of which were started by Martanda Varma in the mid-eighteenth century. The *hiranyagarbham*, literally 'golden womb', was one of the most important state rituals. This was one of the sixteen *mahadanams*, or great donations.¹⁸ It was described in a Sanskrit work along with the *tulapurusanadanam*, and both rituals were performed after the Maharaja's accession to the throne.¹⁹ In this ceremony, a lotus of pure gold was prepared. Then, the five products of a cow (milk, curd, butter, urine and dung) were put into the golden vessel, which was considered to be a cow's womb, and the Raja entered the vessel. The cover was put on the vessel, and the Raja dipped into the water five times, during which the officiating priests repeated prayers. After emerging from the vessel and going through other ceremonies, the Raja prostrated himself before the image of Sri Padmanabha Swamy. Then the 'high priest' took the crown and placed it on the Raja's head.²⁰

The aims of this ceremony are not very clear. Samuel Mateer stated that it was 'to raise the Rajah from the ranks of Sudra caste ... to the position and dignity of a Brahman, or as near this as it is possible'.²¹ But Shungoonny Menon denied this view and wrote that it was 'simply ridiculous' that 'an individual or a family would be raised in rank and caste' by the performance of this ceremony.²²

¹⁷P. Rajagopalachari, *Note on the Administration of Travancore* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1914), p. 3.

¹⁸Susan Bayly points out that the *hiranyagarbham* was also performed in Tanjore and in some of the poligar domains in south India. Dirks also writes that the performance of the great gift ceremony including *hiranyagarbham* and *tulapurusanadanam* became the principal ritual modality of kingly beneficence by the time of the great Colas. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 66; Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (1987, 2nd edition, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 37.

¹⁹Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, pp. 44, 45.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 57.

²¹Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London: John Snow and Co., 1871), p. 169.

²²Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 54.

He insisted that Travancore Rajas were Kshatrya and that the male members of the ruling families wore the sacred thread called 'poonunool'.²³ However, it seems at least clear that the Raja, by performing the ceremony, gained a new birth and his authority was greatly raised. The golden lotus was afterwards broken up and distributed among the Raja's personal attendants, the Brahmins and others.²⁴ Thus the hiranyagarbham was a ceremony of rebirth.

In Travancore, almost all the Maharajas who come after Martanda Varma performed this ceremony. The names of the Maharajas, the years of their reigns and the years in which this ritual was performed are as follows:²⁵

| | |
|--|------|
| Martanda Varma (1729-58) | 1751 |
| Rama Varma (1758-98) | 1761 |
| Bala Rama Varma (1798-1810) | 1801 |
| Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma (1829-47) | 1834 |
| Uthram Thirunal Martanda Varma (1847-60) | 1854 |
| Ayilyam Thirunal Rama Varma (1860-80) | 1871 |
| Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma (1885-24) | 1894 |

The Tulapurusanam, or *tulabharam*, was another ritual.²⁶ This was said to be performed to 'promote the dignity and glory' of the rulers.²⁷ Weighing the body of the Raja against an equal weight in gold and distributing the gold mainly among Brahmins were the main features of the tulapurusanam. Although several ancient kings of Travancore performed this ceremony, it became a 'regular feature' after Martanda Varma. In the nineteenth century, it was held at least in the years 1829, 1850 and 1870.²⁸

Another important state ritual was the *murajapam*, which was one of the biggest ceremonies held in the Sri Padmanabhaswamy

²³*Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 170; Kunju, 'The Administration of Travancore', pp. 443-4; Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 57.

²⁵Velu Pillai, *Travancore State Manual* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1940), vol. 4, p. 571.

²⁶*Tula* means 'scale', *purusa* 'man', and *danam* 'gift'. *Bharam* indicates 'burden'.

²⁷Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 62.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 55-9, 61, 71; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 173; Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. 4, p. 56; Kunju, 'The Administration of Travancore', p. 422.

Temple in Trivandrum, the capital of Travancore.²⁹ This ceremony was also originated by Martanda Varma in 1750 with a view to 'expiate the sins of war and annexation of territory'.³⁰ It was held every six years and was supposed to be performed mainly for the defence of the kingdom and the people, the procuring of a regular supply of rain, and the general safety and prosperity of the country.³¹ At this ceremony, which lasted fifty-six days, only the Malayala Brahmins such as the Nambudiris and the Pottis were invited.³² Perhaps the most important part of the ceremony was the subjugation which the Maharaja expressed to the high priest of the Nambudiris. When the chief priest along with others who had travelled from Cochin to Trivandrum as a part of this ceremony came near the palace, the Maharaja joined in the procession and officiated for a short time as one of the bearers of the palanquin of the priest. Then the Maharaja prostrated himself at the feet of the high priest, placed him on a golden seat and even washed his feet. A great number of Brahmins attended the murajapam from all parts of Travancore, and the Travancore government provided food, lodging and other facilities as well as remuneration called dakshna.³³ Not surprisingly, huge sums of revenue were spent on this ceremony. In 1875-76, Rs.182,009 was spent, which was more than the amount spent on education in that year.³⁴ As late as in 1911, the estimated cost for this ceremony was about Rs.500,000, which was about four per cent of the total state expenditure for that year.³⁵

The *arattu*, or bathing festival, was held twice a year, in April and October, in connection with the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple. It lasted for ten days, and on the tenth day, the image of

²⁹*Mura* means 'a course of recitation', and *japam* 'prayer or chanting of Vedic hymns': Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 277.

³⁰Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. I, p. 608.

³¹Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 167.

³²Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. I, pp. 608-9.

³³Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, pp. 167-8; Nagam Aiya also wrote that 'about five thousand guests assembled in the capital in 1905': Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 279, 281.

³⁴Ag. Resident to the Ch. Sec., 18 Dec. 1877, No. 89, in G.O. No. 27, Dec. 1877, MPP, OIOC.

³⁵*Prachina Taraka* 14 June 1911, in NNR 1911, p. 876; The expenditure on murajapam was mainly paid from the budget for the devaswoms, and therefore the expenditure of this department rose sharply every sixth year. In 1917-18, for example, it became Rs. 1,519,370 from Rs. 1,133,590 of the previous year. The increase of about Rs. 380,000 was largely 'due to the murajapam ceremony'. *TAR* 1917-18, p. 7.

Sri Padmanabha was carried in a procession from his temple in Trivandrum to the sea to be bathed. The Maharaja played an essential role in this ceremony as well as in other state rituals. In this procession, he carried a naked sword and a shield, and Nambudiri priests bore the images of Padmanabha, Narasinha and Krishna behind the Maharaja.³⁶

In addition to Sri Padmanabha, the goddess Bhagavati played an important role in Travancore. She was 'the War Goddess' and a tutelary deity of almost all the dynasties of Kerala. The ruling family of Travancore also had a Bhagavati temple at Attingal near Trivandrum.³⁷ This goddess was supposed to rule over the minor divinities or demons worshipped by the lower orders of Hindus and her presence in a village was believed to protect the people from epidemics and other disasters or from the evil influence of devils.³⁸ The Maharaja visited Attingal once a year in January. He went to the Bhagavati Temple in procession wearing no covering on his head or chest. The Maharaja then approached the sword which a priest of the Potti Brahmin put on the altar.³⁹ Then the priest came to the Maharaja with a measure of rice and performed a certain ritual.⁴⁰

Apart from these state rituals, the management of the *uttupuras* was another important feature of Travancore as a Hindu state. The *uttupuras* were institutions in which the Brahmins were fed at the state expense. In 1906, there were forty-two *uttupuras* in Travancore, which were mostly situated near the principal temples.⁴¹ The *uttupuras* were 'very ancient institutions' and were also maintained by other local chiefs in Malabar before the conquest of Martanda Varma, although several new *uttupuras* were constructed by the Maharaja.⁴² These institutions were supposed to have been established chiefly for giving food to Brahmin travellers, but in practice

³⁶Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, pp. 165-6. This procession is held even today by the former ruling family.

³⁷A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979), p. 189.

³⁸Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 54.

³⁹The Potti was used to designate all Malayala Brahmins except the Nambudiris. Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 286.

⁴⁰Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London: W.H. Allen, 1883), pp. 125-5.

⁴¹Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 525; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 181.

⁴²Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 168.

were used by Brahmin residents as well as travellers. Consequently, a number of Brahmins came from British India with their families and formed their colonies around the *uttupuras*.⁴³ The management of the *uttupuras* was undoubtedly considered one of the most important functions of a Hindu state, and a very large part of the state's revenue was used for their upkeep. In 1864–65, for example, the Travancore government spent Rs.306,869, which was as much as 7.6 per cent of the total expenditure of the state for that year.⁴⁴ Criticism against these 'wasteful' institutions was voiced by the missionaries and even non-Brahmin Malayalis.⁴⁵ Samuel Mateer, an LMS missionary, stated in 1883 that 'The Christians strongly object to this expenditure of the public funds against their convictions of right ... Intelligent Sudras are far from content with the present state of things'.⁴⁶ But these institutions, as well as the state rituals, continued at least throughout the nineteenth century virtually without any change. It was not until 1909–10 that the Travancore government, in response to public pressure, conducted some substantial revisions regarding these institutions. In this reform, the government abolished eight *uttupuras*, fixed a reduced scale of expenditure for the remaining thirty-three, and laid down the number of travellers and resident poor to be fed there.⁴⁷

The management of the *devaswoms* or religious institutions was another important function of Travancore State, though the state had 'no concern with the management of any temples' until the early nineteenth century.⁴⁸ It was not until 1811–12 that Colonel John Munro, then the Resident and Dewan, assumed control of the landed property of 378 temples and also took over 1171 minor temples which had no property. Since that time, 'the expenditure, establishment and the routine of ceremonies, and rules for management' were settled by the Travancore government. In 1899, according to Nagam Aiya, 1549 out of the 9307 temples which existed in Travancore were under state management, and the ex-

⁴³Rajagopalachari, *Note*, p. 57.

⁴⁴TAR, 1864–65, p. 29.

⁴⁵Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847–1908* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), pp. 111–12.

⁴⁶Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 370.

⁴⁷Rajagopalachari, *Note*, p. 57.

⁴⁸Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 521.

penses of the temples were paid from the general treasury of the government.⁴⁹

As Shungoony Menon explained in 1878, Colonel Munro's aim was to diminish the influence of the temples, which were sometimes hostile to the new regime, by putting them under government control, in order to prevent future commotions. He certainly also intended to secure some permanent revenue from the landed property of the devaswoms and succeeded in doing so.⁵⁰ However, whatever the initial intention might be, the management of the devaswoms became one of the most important functions of the Hindu state. In 1940, Velu Pillai wrote that 'Any measure ... tending to diminish the importance of these institutions or to curtail the expenditure ... would be regarded as tending to uproot that Hindu character'.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the management of the devaswoms became a very effective device for excluding the avarna castes and Syrian Christians from the revenue department and the office of the Tahsildar (local officer). Both offices dealt with the devaswoms, and only *savarna* castes were supposed to be eligible for these offices.⁵² It was only in 1922 that the devaswom department was separated from the revenue department after long and repeated protests from the Syrian Christians and the avarna castes.⁵³ Thus, Travancore had many features which identified it as a Hindu state, and it retained these features largely until 1949, when on its incorporation into the Indian Union Travancore State ceased to exist.⁵⁴

What was the attitude of the British towards these rituals and the resulting expenditure in Travancore? It is true that the British

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 521; vol. II, pp. 72-3.

⁵⁰Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 367-8; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 464.

⁵¹SMPAP, 3rd meeting 1907, p. 118; Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. I, p. 562.

⁵²For example, SMPAP, 3rd meeting, 1907, p. 118.

⁵³Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. I, pp. 572-3.

⁵⁴Susan Bayly has claimed that 'many of the main eighteenth-century state rituals were abandoned' as a result of the campaigns mainly by the Madras government during the 1850s. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, p. 291. But, as we have seen, many important state rituals survived into the nineteenth century and beyond. Maharaja Sri Mulam performed the hiranyagarbham in 1894 and the Travancore government was criticized for its enormous expenditure on the murajapam even in 1935. In addition, the dedication of the state to Sri Padmanabha also continued to be part of the constitution of this state, as was known to 'every child' in Travancore.

occasionally advised the Travancore government to reduce these ceremonial costs. In 1871, for example, the Madras government stated that the cost of the devaswoms and uttupuras was 'an unnecessarily heavy charge on the State', and ordered the Resident to advise the Travancore government to conduct 'a careful scrutiny of this expenditure with a view to its reduction'. They also advised the Maharaja to reduce 'Palace expenses' so as to release funds for more 'useful' purposes such as public works and education.⁵⁵ However, what seems more important is not the fact that the Madras government urged the reduction of this expenditure but that, despite their advice, a very large sum of revenue continued to be spent on state rituals and on institutions like the uttupuras. This was certainly because the British as well as Travancore State considered that such expenditures were essential to preserve the Hindu-state ideology and that they helped to maintain the authority and legitimacy of the Maharaja's rule.

There is no doubt that the British fully recognized the importance of using rituals and symbols for ruling India. Particularly from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, they ranked the princes or rulers of the native states and the Indians who were under direct British rule by creating a system of royal titles and privileges. The princes were, for example, ranked by several criteria including the size of the state and the amount of their revenue, and a code of conduct was established, which prescribed the type of cloth they wore, the weapons they could carry, the number of gun salutes they were entitled to, and so on.⁵⁶ In addition, the British performed splendid state rituals in India, such as the Imperial Assemblage of 1877 and the Imperial Durbar of 1903, which were held to proclaim Queen Victoria Empress and Edward VII Emperor of India. Lord Lytton (Viceroy, 1876–80), who planned and carried out the Assemblage, stated that 'the further East you go, the greater becomes the importance of a bit of bunting'.⁵⁷ However, as David Cannadine has pointed out, the British as well as the other nations in Europe also tried to use rituals in their own country. Particularly from the 1870s, old ceremonials were revived

⁵⁵G.O. No. 63, 26 Feb. 1872, MPP, OIOC; Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 575.

⁵⁶Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 180–1.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 185, 208.

and new rituals were 'invented'.⁵⁸ In any case, there is no doubt that the British recognized the importance of using rituals in politics and, therefore, largely allowed state rituals in the princely states to continue, even though they sometimes demanded a reduction in expenditure.

Non-Hindus and the Hindu State

The situation surrounding this ideology of a Hindu state changed greatly, particularly from the late nineteenth century. The political awakening of various castes was one of the principal factors which weakened the legitimating power of this Hindu-state ideology. In particular, the awakening of Syrian Christians seems to have been very important. Syrians increasingly expressed their complaints against the state and began to pay more attention to their religious identity.

Travancore was a state which had a large number of non-Hindus, particularly Syrian Christians. In 1875, Christians formed about 20 per cent of the total population, and Muslims 6 per cent.⁵⁹ These different religions seem to have co-existed and largely integrated into the Hindu state in 'pre-modern' Travancore. One of the principal reasons for this co-existence was a semi-official state policy of religious tolerance. Regarding this, Lieutenants Ward and Conner, who surveyed Travancore and Cochin from 1816 to 1820, stated that 'Christianity is fully acknowledged by the chief authorities in those countries, and whether from their justice or indifference does not appear to have been exposed to persecution'.⁶⁰ Dewan V.P. Madhava Rao stated at the first meeting of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly in 1904 that 'equality of treatment to all religions' was one of the principal features of Travancore State.⁶¹ Missionaries more or less recognized this aspect. J. Knowles, an LMS missionary, stated in 1898 that 'the Travancore State has been conspicuous by its toleration of non-Hindu

⁵⁸David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition" c. 1820-1977', in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 108.

⁵⁹*Report on the Census of Travancore taken by command of His Highness the Maha Rajah on the 18th May 1875* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1876), p. 156.

⁶⁰Ward and Conner, *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States* (Trivandrum: Sircar Press, 1863), p. 129.

⁶¹*SMPAP*, 1st meeting, 1904, p. 3.

religions'.⁶² In fact Hindu kings gave the Syrians privileges and honours that distinguished them as a high caste. And Syrians themselves attempted to have the support of the king when there was a dispute over ecclesiastical power within their church.⁶³ Also, as Leslie Brown has pointed out, Syrian Christians joined in many festivals, such as Onam and Vishu; engaged in temple celebrations; and gave offerings to the temples along with Hindus.⁶⁴

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Syrian Christians, as will be seen in Chapter 5, began to complain strongly about unfair treatment by the state, and the Hindus came to view the increasing influence of the Christians as a serious problem. With the growth of religious identities, it became increasingly difficult to integrate non-Hindus in the Hindu state by using Hindu-state ideology alone. Also, the political awakening of the various Hindu castes was a grave problem for the state at the time. Under these circumstances, the state adopted a kind of democratic measure in order to respond to demands from various castes and communities. The creation and development of the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly are important examples of the state's response to these new communal circumstances. In other words, the state became more secular.

However, it is also true that the state's Hindu ideology still wielded a considerable influence. As we have seen, 'every child' in Travancore knew that the Maharaja was the servant of Sri Padmanabha, even in the 1920s and 1930s. The Agent to the Governor-General, in charge of Travancore, Cochin and other south Indian states, stated in 1933 that 'The loyal tradition in Indian States is wonderfully strong'.⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, the state continued to perform rituals such as the murajapam and to manage the uttupuras. According to the AGG, a murajapam was held as late as in 1935 at a cost of about Rs. 500,000.⁶⁶ Needless to say, maintaining the Hindu-state ideology was one of the principal concerns of

⁶² Knowles to Thompson, 11 July 1898, TL, Box 18, Folder 6, CWMA.

⁶³ Susan Visvanathan, *The Christians of Kerala: History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba* (Madras, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 3, 24.

⁶⁴ Leslie Brown, *The Indian Christians of St Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, first published 1956), p. 171. Onam is a festival of the new moon in September, and Vishu is that of the vernal equinox.

⁶⁵ Field to Glancy, 1 Feb. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

⁶⁶ FR, 15 Dec. 1935, Travancore Affairs, L/P&S/13/1283, OIOC.

the Maharaja. In 1949, when Travancore was about to be merged into the new state of Travancore-Cochin, the Maharaja stated that he 'governed the State on behalf and as a servant of Sri Padmanabha and that he attached great importance to this position being maintained'.⁶⁷ There is no doubt that the Maharaja fully recognized that this ideology was a means by which he could secure as good a future position as possible for himself even if he lost most of his political power as he was bound to do.

Language and the State: Tamil and Malayalam

In addition to the growth of communal identities regarding religion and caste, the problem of linguistic identities also became a factor which weakened the integrity of Travancore State. In Travancore, about 84 per cent of the population spoke Malayalam and 15 per cent Tamil in 1931. The Tamil population was largely concentrated in the four southernmost taluks of Thovala, Agasthiswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode, which now comprise Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu State. In these places, more than 87 per cent of the population spoke Tamil.⁶⁸ Although the Census Report of 1931 declared that 'Malayalam and Tamil are the vernaculars of the State',⁶⁹ the Tamil language was almost completely neglected by the Travancore government at least until the late nineteenth century. Malayalam was taught at most government schools and was used in law courts and government offices even in places where almost the entire population spoke Tamil.⁷⁰

One of the earliest protests against this situation was an article in a Tamil newspaper. The Trichinopoly-based *Tirisirapura Tamil Selvan* demanded in 1893 that the *Government Gazette*, which was published at the time in English and Malayalam, should be published in Tamil as well.⁷¹ However, the demand was ignored and the situation seems to have not changed greatly after that. Also in 1900,

⁶⁷V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (1956, reprinted London: Sangam Books, 1985), p. 278.

⁶⁸*Census of India, 1931*, vol. xxviii, *Travancore*, part 1, *Report* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1932), p. 321.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁷⁰*Addresses to Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair, Dewan of Travancore* (Trivandrum, 1920), p. 9.

⁷¹*Tirisirapura Tamil Selvan*, 29 July 1893, NNR.

a similar article was published in a Nagercoil-based newspaper. It demanded that a Tamil translator be appointed by the government and that 'Tamil matters of public interest' in the *Gazette* should be translated into Tamil.⁷² After the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was formed in 1904, the demands of the Tamil population were frequently expressed there. In 1910, a Catholic member of the Assembly complained that Malayalam was 'being taught as the chief language in all the schools' and that the official language in the courts and cutcherries (government offices) was Malayalam. He then complained of the situation, stating that it was 'as if the interests to be consulted were those of officials and officials alone'.⁷³

Responding to these demands, the Travancore government began to convert Malayalam schools into Tamil schools in the Tamil-speaking areas, under the dewanship of Sir P. Rajagopalachari (Dewan, 1907–14), who was also well-known for his favourable policies towards the lower castes. Thus, in 1914, there were 14 Malayalam schools and 12 Tamil schools in the two taluks of Thovala and Agustiswaram.⁷⁴ This policy was continued by Sir M. Krishnan Nair (Dewan, 1914–20). In 1918, the 'Taluk Educational Committee' of Shencottah, another Tamil-speaking area situated in central Travancore, expressed its appreciation of the Dewan for his 'vigorous steps ... to restore "Tamil" to its proper place'.⁷⁵

However, not surprisingly, this conversion of schools from Malayalam to Tamil encountered opposition from Malayalam-speaking minorities in Tamil-majority areas. In the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of 1924, a Nayar member complained that the conversion of Malayalam schools placed their boys at a great disadvantage, and he demanded that the government 'should not persist in such a policy'.⁷⁶ As a compromise, the Travancore government published a guideline that 'if the majority of students in any schools are Tamils in proportion of 2 to 1, such an institution may be

⁷²*Nanchi Nesan*, 29 Dec. 1900, NNR.

⁷³*SMPAP*, 6th session, 1910, p. 42.

⁷⁴*SMPAP*, 10th session, 1914, p. 98.

⁷⁵*Addresses to Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair* p. 327.

⁷⁶*SMPAP*, 20th session, 1924, pp. 179–80.

converted into a Tamil school'.⁷⁷ Thus, although their demands were partly accepted, the Tamil-speaking population was still at a great disadvantage in educational terms. Partly because of this, the number of literates in Tamil was considerably fewer than those in Malayalam. In 1931, there were 185 Tamil speakers for every 1000 Malayalam speakers, while there were only 87 Tamil literates to every 1000 Malayalam literates.⁷⁸ One of the reasons was, as the Census Report admitted, that 'there are Tamilians who can read and write Malayalam but not their own language'.⁷⁹

Under these circumstances, separatist movements inevitably arose. An organization called the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress was created, and the Tamils began to speak of 'the tyranny of the brute minority' and conducted 'the "Down with Malayalis" movement'.⁸⁰ This movement finally resulted in the separation of the four southern taluks and a part of Shencottah from the former Travancore State under the States Reorganization Act of 1956.⁸¹ Thus, the separatist movement of the Tamils in Travancore was undoubtedly one of the factors that caused the eventual disintegration of Travancore State.

Meanwhile, there can be no doubt that the movements of the Tamils in Travancore were greatly stimulated by other communal movements, which also demanded fairer treatment from the state. But perhaps the more important factor was the growth of Tamil identity in the Madras Presidency. The linguistic discovery of the Rev. Robert Caldwell (1819-91) was one of the factors which stimulated the growth of Tamil identity. He informed Tamils that Sanskrit had originally been brought to south India by 'Aryan Brahman colonists' and also that Tamil literature possessed great sophistication.⁸² As a result of this and other stimuli, around the 1900s, a number of Tamil associations were established with a view

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸Census of India, 1931, Travancore, p. 323.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁸⁰V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (1956, reprinted London: Sangam Books, 1985), p. 277; E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1952), p. 165.

⁸¹Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, p. 311.

⁸²Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 282.

to encouraging the study of Tamil literature and language.⁸³ Also, the Justice Party, which was formed in 1916 to promote the non-Brahmin movement, encouraged Tamil studies.⁸⁴ These factors were undoubtedly responsible for the growth of Tamil identity, and this newly-emerged ideology in turn influenced the attitudes of the Tamils in Travancore and encouraged them to demand fairer treatment from the Travancore government.

As for the Malayalis themselves, however, it is doubtful that there was as strong a manifestation of Malayali identity as of the Tamils. Perhaps one of the reasons for this was that, in Tamil areas, Tamil nationalism emerged largely from confrontation between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, in other words, between the 'Aryans' and 'Dravidians'. Consequently, it was advantageous for the Tamil non-Brahmins to create a Tamil identity among non-Brahmins in order to achieve their political ends. However, in Malayalam-speaking areas, the political struggle took place mainly between caste Hindus and non-caste Hindus or with Syrian Christians. Thus, almost all of the participants were 'Dravidians'. Izhavas and Syrian Christians do not appear to have seen any political value in asserting their 'Malayali-ness'. However, the powerful movement in the Tamil-speaking areas as well as in the Telugu-speaking areas, which emerged as the Andhra movement,⁸⁵ could have had some influence upon the Malayalis. Malayalis in Kerala also seem to have begun to take interest in their own language and culture largely from the late nineteenth century onwards. Poets and novelists began to produce a great deal of Malayalam literature. V.C. Balakrishna Panikkar (1889–1915), for example, composed poems which 'marked the first important stage in the evolution of modern Malayalam poetry', and O. Chandu Menon wrote a famous novel *Indulekha* in 1889.⁸⁶ However, the Malayalis' interest in their own language and culture was perhaps most clearly expressed in the Aikya (United) Kerala Movement, which attempted to integrate the three different administrative regions of Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar. One of the earliest resolutions on this subject

⁸³ *New India*, 18 Aug. 1916, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁸⁵ For the Andhra movement, see John G. Leonard, 'Politics and Social Change in South India: A study of the Andhra Movement', in *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 5, 1, 1967, pp. 60–77.

⁸⁶ Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, pp. 340–6.

was passed at a political conference under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1928.⁸⁷ The communists also played an important role in putting forward the slogan *Aikya Kerala* in the 1940s.⁸⁸

The attitude of the Maharaja of Cochin towards these movements was very different from that of the Maharaja of Travancore. The Maharaja of Cochin, who undoubtedly wanted to gain a leading position in the newly-formed state, sympathized with the Kerala movement. In 1946, he expressed his desire to work towards merging Cochin in a united state.⁸⁹ Conversely, the Maharaja of Travancore, along with his Dewan, strongly opposed this movement.⁹⁰ Dewan Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, as is well-known, planned instead to proclaim the independence of Travancore.⁹¹ However, these two states were finally merged into the state of Travancore-Cochin on 1 July 1949, and Kerala State was finally formed on 1 November 1956. At the same time, the Tamil-speaking areas in Travancore joined Tamilnadu State. Thus, the growth of linguistic identity and the cultural awakening of the Tamils and Malayalis resulted in the formation of linguistic states in independent India and in the disappearance of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin.

Travancore as a Model State

As we have seen, Travancore was a state which had a number of conspicuously Hindu elements, and to continue to be a Hindu state was undoubtedly one of the most important objectives of Travancore State. But Travancore was also well-known for an 'enlightened' policy through which it pursued the objective of modernization. This policy owed much to the Maharajas themselves.

The Maharaja, as a ruler of the Hindu state, had to observe a number of prayers and Hindu rituals apart from the rituals previously mentioned. 'Whatever the season', according to J. D. Rees, the British Resident in 1895-98, Maharaja Sri Mulam 'plunged into

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁸⁸A.K. Gopalan, *Kerala: Past and Present* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1959), p. 75.

⁸⁹Namboodiripad, *The National Question*, p. 164.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁹¹Gopalan, *Kerala*, p. 58.

cold water' at half-past seven in the morning. Then he recited his prayers and went to the family pagoda.⁹² Animal food was not used in the diet of his family. Pure water was brought every morning from a certain river, and no food was eaten with Europeans.⁹³

But, at the same time, the Maharaja and other members of the ruling family were accustomed to western ideas and ways of life. They were usually educated in English and the vernacular languages by European and Indian tutors who were imparted western higher education.⁹⁴ These tutors were basically selected by the Maharaja and approved by the Madras government in the same way as other major government appointments.⁹⁵ As a result, most of them, including female members of the ruling family, spoke English, and English books and illustrated papers were procured and read in their homes. Samuel Mateer wrote in 1882 regarding the royal family that 'Pleasant intercourse is maintained with Europeans of position by attending their garden parties, or meeting them at the military band in the public gardens'.⁹⁶ Thus, it was in a sense natural that Maharaja Ayilliam Thirunal Rama Varma expressed his view through the Dewan in 1865 at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the new government offices. Dewan Madava Row read in the Maharaja's address that:

It is knowledge that now chiefly constitutes the difference between one nation and another... What is required then is that education should permeate all the parts of this community... In pursuit of such inquiries, they (the higher classes) must cast off all prejudices, and follow reason to those great practical principals which are the boast of the more advanced of the European nations.⁹⁷

⁹²J.D. Rees, 'The Daily Life of an Indian Prince', *Macmillan's Magazine*, No. 9, July 1906, p. 715.

⁹³Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 126.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁹⁵In 1877, for example, the education of the younger princes, aged 12 and 9 years, was entrusted to N. Runga Row, First Assistant in the College. From H.E. Sullivan, Ag. Resident, in G.O., 29 Aug. 1877; Also, as guardian and tutor to the young princes, H.S. Ferguson was employed in 1880, G.O. No. 291, 2 July 1880, MPP, OIOC.

⁹⁶Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 128.

⁹⁷*Travancore Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 9 Dec. 1865, in G.O. No. 38, 20 Feb. 1866, MPP, OIOC.

In fact, during this Maharaja's reign from 1860 to 1880, numerous reforms were introduced, largely with the help of a famous Dewan, Sir T. Madava Row.

However, before Madava Row took the office of Dewan in 1858 and before this Maharaja assumed the throne in 1860, Travancore was notorious for its misrule, and there was even a threat of annexation by the British. As is well known, by the 1850s, the East India Company had annexed extensive territories from many princes, using misgovernment and the 'doctrine of lapse' as its main justifications. Coorg, Sind, Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi, Sambalpur, Bhagat, Awadh, and other states were annexed mainly by Lord Dalhousie, well known for his annexation policy.⁹⁸ Although the annexation of Travancore did not actually happen, at least partly due to the outbreak of the Mutiny and Rebellion in 1857, the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the affairs of Travancore was insisted on at the time. Thus, the threat of the annexation of Travancore was certainly very real at the time.⁹⁹

In the 1850s, the missionaries of the London Missionary Society also condemned the misgovernment of Travancore. They sent a number of petitions to the Madras government asking for its intervention to improve the situation, in which 'oppressions and extortions of the grossest kind' had in 'late years so much multiplied'. In 1855, for example, the missionaries presented such matters as: (1) the assault, false imprisonment and torture which were committed by the police; (2) corruption among the sirkar (state) officials; (3) corrupt state of the higher courts; (4) evils arising from the monopoly of pepper, salt and cardamon; and even (5) decreasing revenue of the state. The missionaries also mentioned that the Dewan and Resident, who were very hostile to the missionaries, were unsuitable for their offices and petitioned for their resignation. Rev. John Cox, for example, wrote in 1857 that 'the only way of avoiding annexation is to remove the present Resident and Dewan'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764-1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 261-2; Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 64-6; V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (London: Sangam Books, 1985), p. 8. From 1841 to 1856, 220,000 out of 808,000 square miles of the native rulers' territories were annexed. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰John Cox, *Travancore: Its Present Ruin*, pp. xxxiii, B2, 4, 16, 20.

Under these circumstances, the appointment of Sir T. Madava Row as Dewan was an important turning point. He assumed the office in 1858 after the death of V. Krishna Row, the previous Dewan. He was educated at the High School established in Madras by the Governor of Madras. The Head Master there was E. B. Powell, a Cambridge graduate. He imparted a liberal English education to the students including three future Dewans of Travancore, namely Sir T. Madava Row (Dewan, 1858-72), Sir A. Seshiah Sastri (1872-77) and V. Ramiengar (1880-87). Madava Row began his career in Travancore as a tutor of the princes, one of whom became Maharaja later on. After working as Dewan Peishcar in charge of the Southern Division, he was appointed Dewan of Travancore.¹⁰¹

As a Dewan, he introduced a number of reforms into almost all areas of administration. During his Dewanship, a great number of educational and medical institutions were created; the public works department was organized and numerous roads and public buildings, including the new public offices, were constructed; judicial reforms were introduced and 'eminent persons' were brought in as judges from outside the state; the anchal (post) department was organized; 'oppressive' state monopolies such as that of pepper were abolished; and full ownership of 'sirkar pattam land' was granted to the holders.¹⁰²

The Madras government greatly appreciated his efforts from the earliest stages of his administration. It wrote on 23 March 1859 that 'complaints to Government of oppression and misrule in Travancore have greatly decreased since his assumption of Office'.¹⁰³ In 1866, he was invested with the Knighthood of the Order of the Star of India together with the Maharaja who was appointed to be a Knight of that Most Excellent Order.¹⁰⁴ Also in 1866 the British government decided that the Raja of Travancore should be called

¹⁰¹Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 65-6; Nagan Aiya, *Manual*, vol. I, pp. 559-62; C.K. Menon, *A Critical Essay on Sir Seshiah Sastri* (Madras: Minerva Press, 1903), p. 4.

¹⁰²Kondoor Krishna Pillai, *Travancore and its Ruler* (Changanacherry: Sudharma Publishing House, 1941), pp. 22-3; Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 75-103.

¹⁰³Ch. Sec. Fort St. George, to Sec. to Govt. of India, 23 Mar. 1859, No. 183, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁰⁴Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 565; Napier to Maharaja, 22 Apr. 1966, in G.O. No. 102, 26 Apr. 1966, MPP, OIOC.

'Maharaja' in future.¹⁰⁵ Although Madava Row had to resign after a confrontation with the Maharaja, the 'enlightened' policy of the government continued. Consequently, Travancore began to gain a reputation as a 'model' state. This reputation was certainly established at the latest by 1873, when the Acting Governor of Madras described Travancore as 'a Model Native State'.¹⁰⁶

As to the attitude of the missionaries, they largely welcomed Madava Row's new administration. As we have seen, removing Resident W. Cullen and Dewan Krishna Row and introducing a number of reforms was what the missionaries wanted in the 1850s. Samuel Mateer, referring to Madava Row, stated in 1871 that 'It seems providential that his eminent talents, firmness, and political sagacity have for so long a time been devoted to the interest of Travancore'.¹⁰⁷

But why was Madava Row so keen to introduce the reforms? As Robin Jeffrey has pointed out, one of his basic objects was to achieve fame,¹⁰⁸ and he apparently knew very well what he needed to do for this purpose. In fact, he was one of the most successful administrators in nineteenth-century India. He was well known as an enlightened and able administrator and worked as Dewan of Indore as well as Regent of Baroda after his retirement from the Travancore service. But personal fame does not seem to have been his only concern. Apparently, he had a kind of nationalistic sentiment and showed much interest in enlarging the autonomous area for Indian administrators. Since annexation would deprive Indians of a number of opportunities to govern the states with a fair degree of independence, the annexation of the princely states was one of the most serious threats to him as well as to the rulers themselves. The office of Dewan was the highest post which Indian administrators could obtain. Undoubtedly, it was partly from this concern that he introduced a number of substantial reforms in Travancore. And this view was certainly shared by some other Indians. A native newspaper stated in 1896 that 'As the British Government has kept out the Indians from all the responsible administration, it is only in the service of Native States that they can hope to display their talents and ability'.¹⁰⁹ Also, between 1851 and

¹⁰⁵Viceroy to Maharaja, 6 Aug. 1866, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁰⁶Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 560.

¹⁰⁷Mateer, *The land of Charity*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁸Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁹*Kerala Patrika*, 8 Feb. 1896, NNR.

1884, highly educated Indians formed three organizations in India, namely the Madras Native Association, the Bombay Association and the Indian Association. Part of the purpose of these organizations was to press the British to Indianize the services of the state.¹¹⁰

Madava Row also displayed this rather nationalistic attitude in the case of Pudukkottai, a small princely state in south India. In the 1870s, Pudukkottai came under grave threat. Due to misrule, the Raja was deprived of the salute of eleven guns and of the title of His Highness.¹¹¹ When the appointment of the next Dewan was considered, Madava Row suggested the name of Seshiah Sastri, who had also been a student of Powell's High School as well as the Dewan of Travancore. Moreover, he strongly urged Sastri to accept the position. Madava Row wrote to Seshiah Sastri:

You should by no means refuse to that state the benefit of your knowledge and experience. As natives we cannot but be the well-wishers of native states. Therefore let us do our utmost to set Pudukota on a sound footing... Many native states have gone. Tanjore is no more. In the Madras Presidency there remain only Travancore, Cochin, and Pudukota to speak of. The two former are pretty safe. I am sincerely and earnestly anxious for the third state... In this circumstance, I must again press you to vouchsafe to Pudukota what it so much requires—the service of a first-rate man.¹¹²

As Madava Row advised, Seshiah Sastri assumed the office of Dewan of Pudukkottai in 1878 and administered this state for sixteen years.¹¹³ The title of His Highness and the eleven-gun salute were eventually restored in 1886.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 180.

¹¹¹Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (1987, 2nd edition, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 388–9; C.K. Menon, *A Critical Essay* p. 31–3; The British government divided native states into three classes, namely 'the Salute States', 'Non-Salute States' and the hereditary landowners such as Talukdars, Thanedars, Thakurs and Jagirdars. There were 118 Salute States and each state was allowed a certain number of gun salutes. Baroda, Gwalior, Hyderabad and Berar, Jammu and Kashmir, and Mysore were accorded the largest 21 gunsalute. Travancore was given a 19 gun salute: Charles Allen and Sharada Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes* (London: Century Publishing, 1984), p. 17.

¹¹²Quoted in R.V. Kamesvara Aiyar, *Sir A. Seshiah Sastri* (Madras: Srinivasa, Varadachari & Co., 1902), p. 295.

¹¹³C.K. Menon, *A Critical Essay*, p. 32.

¹¹⁴Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, p. 389.

Madava Row's attitude regarding this matter was consistent with his involvement in the nationalist movement in India. He participated in the Indian National Congress when it was held in Madras in 1887.¹¹⁵ His nationalistic view was also evident in the case regarding the jurisdiction of Travancore State, as will be seen next.

Jurisdiction over European British Subjects

There was no rigid agreement between the Travancore government and the Madras government regarding jurisdiction over European British subjects until the 1860s. But there is no doubt that the British allowed Travancore a certain amount of jurisdiction in the matter before that time. In 1837, the Government of India wrote to the Madras government:

Europeans residing in the territory of Native States, not being servants of the British Government, must be in all respects and in all cases, civil and criminal, subject to the law of the country in which they reside.¹¹⁶

This right of the Travancore government to try European British subjects remained unchanged until 1868, when John Liddell, the former Acting Commercial Agent of the Travancore government, petitioned the Madras government to release him from the Travancore prison. He had committed theft by taking money away from the treasury of Travancore during his tenure. Accordingly, he had been sentenced to twelve months' simple imprisonment by the Travancore court.¹¹⁷

The Madras government at first accepted the petition and the Resident wrote to T. Madava Row in October 1868 that 'his trial was illegal' and that 'he is entitled to be released'.¹¹⁸ Madava Row protested against this decision, claiming that jurisdiction was 'an inherent right of sovereignty'. Then, quoting Queen Victoria's

¹¹⁵C.K. Menon, *A Critical Essay*, pp. 28, 32.

¹¹⁶Sec. to Govt. of India Political Dpt., to Sec. to Govt. of Fort St. George, 12 June 1837, in MPP, 24 June 1874, OIOC.

¹¹⁷Madava Row to H. Newill, 13 Oct. 1868, in *Criminal Jurisdiction of Travancore Law Courts*, p. 4; K.K. Kusuman, 'Travancore's Status in Relation to British Paramountcy—A Case Study', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, vol. 1, Nos. 2, 3, Jan. 1974, p. 303.

¹¹⁸H. Newill to Dewan, 12 Oct. 1868, in *Criminal Jurisdiction*.

Proclamation of 1858 that 'We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native princes as our own', he stated that the Queen would not sanction the decision which would put an end to 'one of the most important of the rights of Native princes'.¹¹⁹ In addition, he wrote:

If it were right and just for the British Government to extinguish the local jurisdiction of Travancore over offences committed therein by *their* Subjects, would it not be equally right and just for other Powers, such as France and America, to adopt a similar course in respect of *their* Subjects in Travancore? And is a Frenchman or American who plunders the Travancore treasury itself to be allowed to plead exemption from the Travancore Courts, and to claim to be tried by *French* or *American* Courts remote and inaccessible as they are?¹²⁰

It is not clear what kind of discussions were carried out in the Madras government. But after receiving this letter from Madava Row, the Madras government, in December 1868, cancelled their previous decision.¹²¹ As a result, Liddell underwent the remainder of his sentence.

However, in February 1874, the Government of India picked up this matter again. They wrote to the Madras government that 'the Viceroy did not recognize the position assumed by Sir Madava Rao' and demanded that the Travancore government should follow the opinion of the Resident when it would deal with the trial of European British subjects.¹²² This decision naturally surprised the Travancore government. About two months later, Seshiah Sastri, then the Dewan of Travancore, wrote to the Resident, expressing 'great surprise and deep concern'. After stating again the argument of his predecessor Madava Row, Seshiah Sastri emphasized how the judicial system of Travancore had western elements. He pointed out that each court had a Christian judge; that the Maharaja 'had not been unwilling to throw open these courts to European Barristers'; that out of seven Magistrates, three were Europeans; and finally that it was under consideration to appoint a European Barrister as a Judge of the High Court.¹²³

¹¹⁹Madava Row to Newill, 23 Oct. 1868, in MPP, 24 June 1874, OIOC.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

¹²¹Newill to Dewan, 19 Dec. 1868, No. 1062, in MPP, 24 June 1847, OIOC.

¹²²Sec. to Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., Judicial, to Ch. Sec. to Govt. Fort St. George, 29 Aug. 1873, No. 195-J, in MPP, 3 Feb. 1874, OIOC.

The Madras government compromised with his claim. Under the agreements introduced in 1875, cases against European British subjects were to be tried 'by the officers of the State who are appointed Special Magistrates by the Darbar [Travancore government] and Justices of Peace by Government of India'.¹²⁴ Accordingly, two Britons were appointed Special Magistrates in 1875 by the Travancore government: one was located at Alleppey and the other at Trivandrum.¹²⁵ Also, 'five officers of the State were notified as Justices of the Peace' in the same year.¹²⁶

This measure was taken partly because it was considered inconvenient for European British subjects as well as the 'natives' to have tribunals outside the state and also because it was thought to be 'rather anomalous' that the Travancore government could not put on trial its own officials who were European British subjects. Indeed, the Travancore government employed a number of Europeans at the time.¹²⁷ But it was at least one of the official reasons that the British government recognized the improvement of the judicial system of Travancore. G.A. Ballard, the Resident, wrote to Dewan Seshiah Sastri:

In consideration ... of the enlightened and progressive principles which have been followed by the State in its judicial administration, the Governor of Madras in Council was pleased to recommend ... that the Sirkar [state], and not the British Government, shall appoint Magistrates ...¹²⁸

As we have seen, the Dewan undoubtedly had an idea that the westernization of the judicial system could help the princely state to secure its jurisdiction regarding offences which were committed within its territory, and this was at least the semi-official view of the British government as well.

As a state, Travancore undoubtedly had a tendency to secure its sovereignty and to enlarge its autonomous area as much as possible.

¹²³G.A. Ballard, to Ag. Ch. Sec., 23 Apr. 1874, No. 38, MPP, OIOC.

¹²⁴Ag. Ch. Sec. to Madras Govt., to Sec. to Govt. of India in Foreign Dept., 20 June 1906, File No. Intl-B, July 1906, 328-32, Foreign Dept, Internal Branch, NAI.

¹²⁵*Important Papers relating to Criminal Jurisdiction*, pp. 16, 32.

¹²⁶Under Sec. to Govt. of India in Foreign Dept., to Ag. Ch. Sec. to Govt. of Madras, No. 1428-I, A., 18 April 1906, Intl-B, July 1906, Foreign Dept, Internal Branch, NAI.

¹²⁷Memorandum by G.A. Ballard, 25 April 1874, in MPP, 24 June 1874, OIOC.

¹²⁸Ballard to Seshiah Sastri, 6 Nov. 1874, No. 691, in *Important Papers relating to Criminal Jurisdiction*, p. 16.

To establish its jurisdiction as well as diminish intervention from the Madras government must have been the most crucial matters for Travancore to consider as a state. Since Travancore was not an equal power with the paramount power, the Maharajas and Dewans apparently considered that reforming the administration in line with that of British India was one of the most efficient ways to achieve these goals. In addition, in the 1860s and 1870s, the Madras government was very keen to demand that the princely states introduce a number of reforms.¹²⁹ This situation certainly promoted the rapid westernization of Travancore.

The Maharajas and the Paramount Power

As has been seen, preserving the Hindu nature of the state and at the same time governing this state in an 'enlightened' way were crucial to the policy of Travancore State. These two elements were clearly recognized by the government itself. Dewan V. P. Madhava Rao, who was not related to Sir T. Madava Row, stated in his address to the first meeting of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly in 1904 that 'Travancore is thus an object lesson of what a Hindu State, when brought under the influence of enlightened and progressive ideas from the West, can achieve without losing the distinctive character imprinted upon it'.¹³⁰ Undoubtedly the Maharaja was the most influential figure in the government and played a key role in formulating policies. The Maharaja of Travancore was not a constitutional monarch, as are many of the monarchs of today. He had detailed knowledge of the administration and had to be consulted regarding almost all matters. Let us here take the case of Maharaja Sri Mulam to examine the Maharaja's role in the state.

Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma ruled Travancore from 1885 to 1924. His reign of thirty-nine years was the longest since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In addition, his reign covered one of the most critical periods in the history of Travancore, in which the society rapidly changed and a number of important events such as social reform movements among various castes occurred. Thus, it seems useful to examine his role and relationship with other officials.

¹²⁹Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 71.

¹³⁰SMPAP, 1st meeting, 1904, p. 3.

The Maharaja spent about two hours every day with his private secretary to peruse 'all the papers himself' and to pass orders. He usually indicated only 'the tenors of the reply', but in important cases he himself prepared draft replies. An abstract of all letters received and replies despatched was placed before him the next day. Accordingly, as Dewan Krishnaswamy Row stated, the Maharaja had 'intimate knowledge of even the smallest detail of the work of every department of the State'.¹³¹ The British Residents also corroborated this in the 1900s. G.T. Mackenzie (Resident, 1899-1904) stated that 'The Maharaja ... knows everything that is going on, and reads every single paper that comes into the Dewan's office'.¹³² In addition, the Maharaja not only knew the details but was also keen to use his influence. J. Andrew (Resident, 1904-06) wrote to the Madras government in 1906 that 'The Maharaja is ... intimately acquainted with all the details of administration, and extremely reluctant to surrender to his Diwan or others any of the powers he has hitherto reserved to himself, especially those relating to appointments'.¹³³

However, needless to say, Travancore was by no means an independent state. It was under the supervision of the Madras government through the British Resident. The relationship between Travancore and the British government was formally established by the treaties of 1795 and 1805. Article ix of the treaty of 1805 stated that:

His Highness hereby promises to pay at all times the utmost attention to such advice as the English Government shall occasionally judge it necessary to offer him with a view to the recovering of his finances, the better collection of his revenues, the administration of justice, the extension of commerce, the encouragement of trade, agriculture and industry, or any other objects connected with the advancement of His Highness' interests, the happiness of his people, and the mutual welfare of both the States.¹³⁴

Accordingly, the British Resident paid attention to almost all the affairs of Travancore State. Rev. Samuel Mateer wrote in 1871 that 'All important measures of legislation and finance, the appointment of the higher officials, and even the succession to the musnud, or throne,

¹³¹Quoted in Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 642.

¹³²Amphill to Curzon, 15 Sep. 1903, Curzon Papers, F111/208, OIOC.

¹³³J. Andrew, 'Confidential Note', in Letter No. 132, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

¹³⁴Quoted in Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 234.

must be submitted to the British Resident for his opinion and sanction before being carried into operation. Sentences of capital punishment, too, must have the concurrence of the Resident before being executed'.¹³⁵ However, as will be seen in the next chapter, the Travancore government did not always comply with the 'advice' exactly. In addition, the British came to refrain from intervening in religious matters or in other matters which would greatly undermine the existing order particularly from the late nineteenth century onwards.

One of the peaks of British interventionist policy in India came in 1856 when Awadh was annexed. Until this time, the East India Company had openly manipulated the princely states,¹³⁶ and Travancore was under threat of annexation, as we have seen. After the Mutiny, however, the policy of annexation was virtually abandoned. The Queen's Proclamation declared that the British would 'respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native princes as our own'.¹³⁷ Although interference did not completely cease, it tended to decrease towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, Lord Curzon (Viceroy, 1899–1905) adopted a very different policy. He did not trust the governing ability of the native rulers and positively intervened in the internal affairs of the states. In fact, fifteen native rulers were 'either forced to abdicate or temporarily deprived of their powers' during his viceroyalty.¹³⁸ However, as will be seen in Chapter 2, even Curzon was very cautious about intervening in social and religious matters, at least in Travancore. Moreover, Curzon's interventionist policy was also largely abandoned by the British government after his retirement. In order to gain the support of the rulers of the princely states and to cope with the growing nationalist movement, Lord Minto (Viceroy, 1905–10) openly adopted a non-interference policy.¹³⁹ He made a well-known speech at Udaipur in 1909, in which he declared:

The Governor-General in Council is opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars with a view to introducing British methods of administration. He prefers that reforms should emanate from the Durbar, and grow up in

¹³⁵ Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 66.

¹³⁶ Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, p. 263.

¹³⁷ Ashton, *The British Attitudes*, p. 17.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–6.

¹³⁹ James Manor, 'The Demise of the Princely Order: Reassessment', in Robin Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 307.

harmony with the traditions of the State. Administrative efficiency is at no time the only or indeed the chief object to be kept in view. This should be specially borne in mind by officers charged temporarily with the administration of a State during a minority, whether they are in sole charge, or associated with a State Council. They occupy a position of peculiar trust, and should never forget that their primary duty is the conservation of the customs of the State.¹⁴⁰

These changes in British policy seem to have considerably influenced the process of the selection of the Dewan, who was responsible for the administration of Travancore.

Selection of the Dewan: V. P. Madhava Rao's Case

The Dewan was usually selected by the Maharaja, and the appointment was then approved by the Madras government. The following case of V. P. Madhava Rao seems to indicate how the Dewan was selected and dismissed, or, more generally, how the policy of the Travancore government was formed.

His predecessor, K. Krishnaswamy Row, assumed the office of Dewan in 1898 after working as Chief Justice of Travancore for as long as fourteen years. Krishnaswamy Row was the Dewan for six years, but he was forced to retire in 1904 on the advice of the Madras government. He certainly managed the state administration considerably well. The British government conferred on him the honour of C.I.E. in 1901.¹⁴¹ But it was not the kind of administration that the Madras government needed at the time. It wanted a 'progressive administrator' who could introduce 'some reforms which were urgently needed' in Travancore.¹⁴² Accordingly, the Madras government advised Maharaja Sri Mulam to select a new Dewan. The Maharaja had no choice but to accept the advice of the Madras government regarding the dismissal of the Dewan. Even though the Maharaja had considerable power over the Travancore administration, he knew his position very well. J. Andrew, the Resident, wrote that 'he is ready to waive his personal views on

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁴¹Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 643. C.I.E. was the lowest honour of 'The Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire' created in 1877. It was distributed to 120 companies. Political and Secret Department Honour Record, L/P&S/15, OIOC.

¹⁴²Annexure to G.O. No. 433, 431, 25 July 1905, MPP, OIOC.

the advice of [Madras] Government'.¹⁴³ Accordingly, the Maharaja selected V. Nagam Aiya.

V. Nagam Aiya was totally a Travancorean. After graduating from the Maharaja's College at Trivandrum, he entered the Travancore service. He was appointed Census Superintendent in 1874 when he was twenty-four years of age. Subsequently, he conducted the Censuses of 1875, 1881 and 1891, along with working as Tahsildar, Dewan Peishcar of Padmanabhapuram Division and other posts.¹⁴⁴ He was certainly among the elite of the Travancore service and 'the only Travancorean the Maharaja considered suitable'.¹⁴⁵

However, the Madras government rejected this appointment, stating that Nagam Aiya was 'quite unfit' for the post.¹⁴⁶ In fact, Nagam Aiya did not have a high reputation among the British officials. The Governor of Madras stated that 'V. Nagam Aiyar is a Travancorean, who has never been out of Travancore, and who has a very inflated idea of himself. He would not do as Diwan, as he is too intimately associated with local cliques, besides lacking the requisite ability'.¹⁴⁷ J. Andrew, the Resident, also wrote in 1905 that 'He is a *persona grata* with His Highness, and is a plausible talker, but shallow and incompetent'.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the newly installed Dewan, V.P. Madhava Rao, removed him from the post of Dewan Peishkar of Settlement of the ground that 'He ... proved so inefficient'. Nagam Aiya was given the work of finishing *The State Manual* instead.¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile, after being denied the right to appoint Nagam Aiya, the Maharaja considered a number of non-Travancorean names and selected V. P. Madhava Rao. He was born in 1850 and gained a B.A. degree at the Madras University in 1869. He worked for the Mysore government as Inspector General of Police, Revenue Commissioner, Member of the Council of Regency and so on, and was

¹⁴³J. Andrew, 'Confidential Note', in Letter No. 132, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁴⁴*Testimonials of V. Nagam Aiya* (Madras: National Press, 1897), in Grant Duff Collection, OIOC.

¹⁴⁵J. Andrew, 'Confidential Note', in Letter No. 132, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷Amphill to Curzon, 15 Sep. 1903, Curzon Papers F/111/205, OIOC.

¹⁴⁸Annexure to G.O. No. 433, 431, 25 July 1905, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*

then appointed Dewan of Travancore.¹⁵⁰ During his Dewanship, V. P. Madhava Rao introduced a number of reforms some of which were the abolition of taxation in kind and the creation of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.¹⁵¹

The Madras government was certainly satisfied with this Dewan who was 'decidedly progressive'.¹⁵² But the Maharaja was not. In this case, as we have seen, the Maharaja's will was ignored by the Madras government twice. First, he had to dismiss K. Krishnaswamy Rao on the advice of the Madras government, and, secondly, his choice of V. Nagam Aiya as Dewan was disapproved. Accordingly, the 'feeling that an outsider was forced on him' rankled him and led him to adopt an unfriendly attitude towards the Dewan from the very beginning. The Resident wrote that 'His Highness heartily dislikes his Minister and constantly insults and irritates him in writing and in personal conversation'.¹⁵³

In addition, there was another cause that made their relationship worsen. The Maharaja was under the strong influence of men called 'Palace Favourites'. In particular, 'the Second Favourite' named Sankaram Tampi, whose formal office was the Manager of the Maharaja's Palace, had 'an extraordinary and very fearful influence' over the Maharaja. Under these circumstances, V.P. Madhava Rao refused to support Tampi. This naturally caused the 'favourite' to make 'a great deal of mischief between the Dewan and Maharaja'. In November 1904, a peon instigated by the 'favourite' insulted the Dewan.¹⁵⁴ In spite of being constantly insulted and irritated, however, Dewan V.P. Madhava Rao, according to the Resident, adopted a perfectly respectful attitude towards the Maharaja. But this relationship could not last long, and finally in 1906, only two years after his appointment, he left the Travancore service.

Thus, the deteriorating relationship between the Maharaja and the Dewan certainly had the decisive result of securing the resignation of the Dewan. It was also due to a confrontation that Sir T. Madava Row (Dewan, 1858-72) was dismissed by Maharaja Ayil-

¹⁵⁰Mr. V.P. Madhava Rao: *A Sketch of His Life*, pp. 2-7.

¹⁵¹He was not related to the well known Dewan Sir T. Madava Row. Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 339.

¹⁵²J. Andrew, 'Confidential Note; in Letter No. 132, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*; Annexure to G.O. No. 433, 431, 25 July 1905, MPP, OIOC.

liam Thirunal. This Maharaja was also 'an autocrat who would brook no opposition, no contradiction, from anybody'. He disliked Sir T. Madava Row (who was once his own tutor), and this became more apparent when the Dewan was about to retire. The Maharaja once wrote to the next Dewan, Seshiah Sastri, that 'this is a spirit of Madava Row and when I see such a spirit my feelings would be disturbed in the same manner'.¹⁵⁵

As we have seen, the Madras government exercised considerable influence with regard to the dismissal and appointment of the Dewan of Travancore, at least in the early twentieth century. At the same time, the Maharaja also had a great influence, particularly over the dismissal of the Dewan. Accordingly, it was essential for the Dewan to satisfy both the Maharaja and the Resident if he wished to survive as Dewan. The Dewan was thus a mediator between the Maharaja and the Resident. In other words, through the Dewan, both the Maharaja and the Resident influenced policy decisions.

The Selection of Dewan in the 1920s and 1930s

After the dismissal of V.P. Madhava Rao, the influence of the Madras government in such matters seems to have dwindled. The policy of non-interference adopted by Lord Minto was apparently instrumental in this. In November 1908, one year before Lord Minto's Udaipur speech, the Raja of Cochin asserted his right of independent administration and wrote to the Resident:

So far as I understand the Constitution, it is that the Ruling Chief is at full liberty to deal independently with all matters of internal administration, and that consulting the Resident about such matters is left entirely to his discretion, the Paramount Power exercising only a general supervision over the Darbar's actions and reserving to themselves the power of interference in cases of grave mal-administration.¹⁵⁶

The Madras government dismissed this view and insisted that it could interfere in any matter relating to the internal administration of the state. However, at the same time, they recognized that 'to do so at a

¹⁵⁵C.K. Menon, *A Critical Essay*, p. 23; Kamesvara Aiyar, *Sir A. Seshiah Sastri* (Madras: Srinivasa, Varadachari and Co., 1902), p. 222; Nagam Aiyar, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 556.

¹⁵⁶Raja of Cochin to Lionel Davidson, 9 Nov. 1908, CRR, R/2/880/87, OIOC.

late stage or after the measure has become *fait accompli* would damage the Maharaja's prestige, which was 'their constant concern'. Accordingly, the Madras government suggested that 'friendly and confidential co-operation' should be maintained 'so as to avoid the official intervention'.¹⁵⁷ Thus, although the Madras government did not abandon their policy to interfere, they become more sensitive to the will of the native rulers.

In Travancore the British government continued to intervene in the selection of the Dewan and in other matters in the 1920s. This was partly because Travancore had a minority administration from 1924 to 1931. In 1925, the Agent to the Governor General (AGG) wrote that 'As regards the Dewanship of Travancore, I take it that so long as there is a minority administration, the sanction of Government of India will be necessary to each fresh appointment'.¹⁵⁸ Maharani Regent Setu Lakshmi Bayi took cognizance of this situation and consulted C.W.E. Cotton, the AGG, when she selected M.E. Watts, who was born in Travancore but had had 'various experiences in the British Indian service', as the next Dewan.¹⁵⁹

In the meantime, especially in the twentieth century, it became increasingly critical for the Travancore government to respond effectively to public demands. For this purpose, Maharaja Sri Mulam created the Legislative Council in 1888. This council was reformed in 1898, 1919, 1921 and 1932. Although its functions were at first 'mainly of an advisory nature', the strength and the rights of the members were enlarged through these reforms. In addition to this Council, the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was also established in 1904 by Maharaja Sri Mulam. It was not a law-making body, and it was at first only 'an assembly of the representatives of the landlords and merchants in the country'. But later this assembly also accommodated the representatives of the lower castes such as the Izhavas, Pulayas and Parayas, and it increasingly became a

¹⁵⁷ Ag. Ch. Sec. to Davidson, 9 March 1909, CRR, R/2/880/87, OIOC.

¹⁵⁸ Political Agent to Officiating Sec. to Govt. of India, 3 Apr. 1925, CRR, R/2/Temp No. 884/148, OIOC. From 1923 onwards, Travancore and Cochin were brought into direct political relations with the Government of India, and after that the former Resident came to be called the Agent to the Governor General, or the Political Agent.

¹⁵⁹ Setu Lakshmi Bahi to Cotton, 7 Jan. 1925, CRR, R/2/884/147, OIOC.

place in which communal interests were expressed.¹⁶⁰ Under these circumstances, the appointment of the Dewan also came to reflect these communal demands.

When the selection of the next Dewan was considered in 1925, the communal feelings of various communities were very strong. There was 'a growing feeling of resentment against the succession of "foreign [i.e., non-Travancorean]" Dewans'. Different communities began to demand the appointment of the Dewan from their own community. The Nayers wanted Krishna Pillai, the Chief Secretary, to be the next Dewan; the Syrian Christians hoped for some Travancoreans in the Mysore service; and the Brahmins demanded another foreign Dewan from Madras.¹⁶¹ Under these circumstances, the Maharani Regent considered that if the Dewan was chosen from one of these particular communities it would cause a serious communal confrontation. When she selected M.E. Watts, she wrote to Cotton, the AGG, that 'he will be above communal jealousies and will be in a position to take a detached view of things'.¹⁶²

Since he was the first Christian and non-Hindu Dewan, except for Colonel John Munro who had held the office from 1811 to 1814, the high-caste Hindus were strongly opposed to this appointment. They insisted that the Dewan in a Hindu state should be a caste-Hindu since he had to play 'a most prominent part' in several festivals and functions and had to also visit temples in company with the Maharaja on several occasions.¹⁶³ However, this appointment was not changed, and Travancore had three non-Hindus, i.e. T. Austin (1932-34) and Sir Muhammad Habibullah (1934-36) in addition to M.E. Watts, out of five Dewans from 1925 to 1949.

Interference from the paramount power regarding the appointment of the Dewan virtually came to an end in Travancore in the 1930s. Sri Chitra came of age in 1931 and became the Maharaja. On 31 August 1936, he wrote to W.A.M. Garstin, the Political Agent, that he had decided to offer the Dewanship to Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who was then 'the Legal and Constitutional

¹⁶⁰Ramakrishnan Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala* (Trivandrum: Kerala Academy of Political Science, 1964), pp. 3-9.

¹⁶¹AGG to Patterson, Offg. Sec. to Govt. of India, 7 April 1925, CRR, R/2/884/147, OIOC.

¹⁶²Setu Lakshmi Bayi to Cotton, 13 Mar. 1925, CRR, R/2/884/147, OIOC.

¹⁶³C. Parameswaran Pillai to Viceroy, date unknown, CRR, R/2/884/147, OIOC.

Advisor' to the Maharaja.¹⁶⁴ Since Ramaswami Aiyar was then 'exceedingly unpopular in South India', Garstin replied to the Maharaja on the same day that 'your Highness will await such advice as his Excellency may wish to offer'.¹⁶⁵ The Maharaja then replied to Garstin on the following day:

I ... feel it my duty to tell you at once that you are evidently under a misconception as to the procedure in the matter of choice of Dewan. In 1932, the Government of India decided to discontinue the practice of the Travancore Government having to inform the AGG and to obtain his approval in respect of appointments to offices on a salary of Rs 500 and above, as not being in consonance with their present policy towards full-powered States...¹⁶⁶

This view was accepted by the Government of India, and the Maharaja appointed C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar as the Dewan. Also, in addition to this case, the Maharaja himself revealed that the selection of Sir Muhammad Habibullah was done independently of the Government of India, even though this was clearly on the advice of C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and that he privately informed the Viceroy of this appointment 'solely because of the friendly personal relations' between the Maharaja and the Viceroy.¹⁶⁷ Thus, shortly after Sri Chitra became the Maharaja the British decided not to intervene in the selection of the Dewan of Travancore, and this decision was largely observed.

Meanwhile, Robin Jeffrey has classified the period from 1904 to 1947 as that of the 'imposed Minister'.¹⁶⁸ He has argued that during this period one 'imposed Minister', or 'outsider enjoying the confidence of British governments and dependent on them for his prestige and future prospects', succeeded another in Travancore as 'The ultimate solution to British governments' problem of how to control major events and decisions in Travancore'.¹⁶⁹ However, it is doubtful that all the Dewans were 'imposed' in this period. As we have seen, the selection of Muhammad Habibullah and Ramas-

¹⁶⁴ Maharaja Rama Varma to Col. Garstin, 31 Aug. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/207, OIOC.

¹⁶⁵ D.M. Field to Pol. Sec. to Govt. of India, 2 Jan. 1935, CRR, R/2/888/210, OIOC; W.A.M. Garstin to Rama Varma, 31 Aug. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/207, OIOC.

¹⁶⁶ Rama Varma to Garstin, 1 Sep. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/207, OIOC.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Robin Jeffrey, 'The Politics of "Indirect Rule": Types of Relationship among Rulers, Ministers and Residents in a "Native State"', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 8, 3 (1975), p. 273.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-7.

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wami Aiyar was conducted totally independently and in fact Ramaswami Aiyar was appointed by the Maharaja against the advice of the AGG. It is true, as Robin Jeffrey has pointed out, that Travancore largely had non-Travancorean Dewans from 1904 to 1947.¹⁷⁰ But the Dewans were not selected only as the British desired, and particularly in the 1930s, British intervention virtually ceased in Travancore at least with regard to the selection of Dewans.

Conclusion

The Travancore government continued to spend enormous sums of revenue on state rituals such as the murajapam and on institutions like the uttupuras even in the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, this expenditure was considered essential to preserve the Hindu-state ideology. This widely accepted ideology was useful to give the Maharaja of Travancore an air of divinity and authority, which greatly contributed to the stability of the Maharaja's rule. The British, who themselves used, for example, splendid ceremonials such as the Imperial Assemblage of 1877, apparently recognized its importance and never demanded the total abolition of state rituals and 'charitable' institutions.

However, Travancore was also known as a 'model state', ruled by 'enlightened' Maharajas, with able Dewans largely after the 1860s. The princes were given an English education and were familiar with western ideas. In addition, they understood their position very well and knew what they should and could do in the political system in which they were placed. They realized that to reform the state administration in line with British India, or to 'modernize' the state, was one of the most efficient ways to maintain and enlarge their autonomous position. The British apparently refrained from interference and gave more autonomy including jurisdiction to the princely states as long as these states were governed well. Conversely, the rulers were deprived of a number

¹⁷⁰ However, not all the Dewans were outsiders, contrary to Jeffrey's arguments. V.S. Subramanya Aiyar (Dewan, 1929–32) was a member of the Travancore service. His 'whole career' was spent in the Travancore service. Just before he was appointed Dewan, he had been a 'Head of Sircar Vakil (attorney)': Maharani to Crosthwaite, 27 Jan. 1929, CRR, R/2/886/180, OIOC; Crosthwaite to Watson, 29 Jan. 1929, CRR, R/2/886/180, OIOC.

of privileges when there was grave misrule, as in the case of Pudukkottai, even though the policy of annexation was almost entirely abandoned after the Mutiny. Moreover, it became more and more necessary for the government to respond to public demand which increased considerably after the middle of the nineteenth century, and to adopt, in a limited sense, democratic measures in its political system. This was largely because the Hindu-state ideology became increasingly inadequate to authorize the Maharaja's rule, even though it continued to have considerable influence. In particular, the growth of communal identities among the Syrian Christians and the lower castes was a decisive factor that made the state reform its administration and adopt certain 'democratic' measures.

In the meantime, apart from the influence of the British, the Maharaja and the Dewan played the most important role in making policy decisions. The Maharaja was not a constitutional monarch in today's sense of the word and, in fact, had considerable personal power. Also, the Dewan was responsible for the whole administration and the reputation of Travancore as a model state was to a large extent due to able Dewans like Sir T. Madava Row. The Dewan was basically chosen and dismissed by the Maharaja and approved by the British authorities. Since both the Maharaja and the British had enormous influence over the selection and dismissal of the Dewan, he generally attempted to satisfy both sides. This relationship between the Maharaja, the paramount power and the Dewan continued to a large extent, though the degree of intervention from the British lessened considerably and almost ceased to exist in the 1930s.

Meanwhile, Travancore was also a state in which an enormous number of people, mainly from the lower castes, converted to Christianity through the activities of the Christian missionaries. The missionaries were a threat to the Hindu state largely due to their efforts to convert the Hindu population. But at the same time, they contributed to the 'modernization' or westernization of Travancore. The crucial and complicated relationship between the missionaries, the Travancore government and the British authorities will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

The British Authorities and the Missionaries

Introduction

As R.E. Frykenberg has pointed out, the view that Christian missions were 'the handmaiden of imperialism' is certainly an oversimplification.¹ It is a well-known fact that the East India Company adopted a policy of religious neutrality and generally avoided taking part in (or even appearing to give support to) the activities of the missionaries. Moreover, there were even instances of 'persecution' by Company officials.² However, it is equally true that the missionaries in Travancore frequently contacted the British authorities to help them achieve certain goals by pressurizing the princely state, and these tactics were successful to some extent. Thus, the missionaries certainly enjoyed relatively 'easy access to the highest government offices'.³ But the attitude of the British authorities towards the missionaries was not always the same. In the second half of the nineteenth century in particular the relationship between the missionaries and the Madras government underwent a significant change, and this is the aspect examined in this chapter.

The missions mainly dealt with in this chapter are the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Both worked in Travancore for a very long time and had great influence on society and government policies. The LMS was established in 1795 by members from various denominations such as the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians and the Methodists. The

¹R.E. Frykenberg, 'Caste, Morality and Western Religion under the Raj', *Modern Asian Studies*, 19, 2 (1995), p. 322.

²Dick Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989), pp. 26-32.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 9, 198.

first LMS missionary in Travancore was W.T. Ringeltaube, a German Lutheran, who commenced his work in 1806. The CMS was formed by the Evangelicals in the Church of England in 1799 and started its work in north Travancore in 1816.⁴ Besides these two societies, there were a few Protestant missions, though they were relatively new and small in size. The Salvation Army established its headquarters at Nagercoil in 1890; the Brother Mission started its work in 1898; and the Lutheran Mission in 1907.⁵ As to Catholic missions, several dioceses in Travancore conducted missionary activities. The Changanachery Diocese was the oldest, which started its work in 1831. Other dioceses were formed in Quilon in 1853 and Verapoly in 1886.⁶ Although it is not very clear how these Catholic missions worked in Travancore, their influence over the political authorities was undoubtedly much smaller than that of the LMS and the CMS. As a result, Travancore State and the Madras government rarely paid attention to them.

The First Half of the Nineteenth Century

There can be no doubt that religious neutrality was one of the main policies of the East India Company. The Governor of Madras stated in 1859 that 'The British Government has now for some years permitted Missionary enterprise though it has carefully abstained from taking any part in it'.⁷ Before 1813, the Company officially prohibited missionary activities in India through its Charter. Missionaries received a permit to reside in India 'only in rare cases' before 1813.⁸ However, as Stephen Neill has pointed out, the attitude of the Company towards missionaries was 'curiously inconsistent and self-contradictory'. In Bengal, the Company authorities were generally hostile to the missionaries, while, in south India, they welcomed the work of the German missionaries.⁹ Also, in Travancore, the Company's attitude was far

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 33-5.

⁵*Census of India, 1931*, vol. xxviii, *Travancore*, part 1, *Report* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1932), p. 341.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Minute of the President, Harris, 28 Feb. 1859, MPP, 15 Mar. 1859, p. 284, OIOC.

⁸Julius Richter, *A History of Missions in India*, p. 145.

⁹Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, p. 149.

from neutral. Both the LMS and the CMS had a great deal of support from the British Residents in the early stages of their history.

Colonel C. Macaulay was the first British Resident who came to Travancore in 1800. He granted a passport and travelling expenses to W.T. Ringeltaube, the first LMS missionary to work in Travancore. Through his influence, Ringeltaube was introduced to the Dewan and applied for permission to build the first Protestant church in Travancore.¹⁰ Ringeltaube wrote that 'our Society is indebted alone to Col. Macaulay', 'without whose determined and fearless interposition, none of their missionaries would have been able to set a foot in that country'.¹¹ Undoubtedly, Macaulay, with great 'zeal', played a role in spreading Christianity in India. During his retirement period in England, he formed plans for the completion of the Malayalam translation of the Bible, which he had begun while he was in Travancore.¹²

Macaulay's successor Col. John Munro (Resident, 1810–19) was 'still more zealous'.¹³ He helped the missionaries in many respects and greatly contributed to the spread of Christianity in Travancore. Firstly, he invited the Church Missionary Society to Travancore and requested them to work among the Syrian Christians. He also persuaded the Rani of Travancore to grant a large amount of land and money to the missionaries. For example, the London Missionary Society was given a bungalow in Nagercoil and Rs. 5000 for the purchase of ricefields. Revenue from these rice fields helped to partially support the Nagercoil Seminary, the LMS's institution for higher education. As for the grant to the CMS, the Rani presented the Kottayam College with Rs. 20,000 which was in the form of land, besides a previous gift of Rs. 1000. She also granted a tract of land near Quilon, at least seven miles in circumference. Moreover, the Rajah of Cochin, through Munro's persuasion, presented Rs. 5000 to the LMS in Travancore. Charles Mead, an LMS missionary, used this to purchase paddy fields and to build the Nagercoil Church.¹⁴

¹⁰C.M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1990, first published 1903), p. 40; Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity* (London: John Snow & Co., 1871), p. 262.

¹¹Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, Introductory Chapter pp. 40–1.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁴Mateer, *The land of Charity*, p. 267; Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, pp. 694–5.

John Munro appointed Charles Mead as the civil judge in Nagercoil: this was 'perhaps ... the only instance in the whole history of British India or of Native States' of a missionary being entrusted with such an office.¹⁵ Munro stated that the reason for this appointment was that 'The scrupulous integrity and conscientious justice of the Christian Judge would exalt the reverence of the people for the British character and contribute to found its influence still more on the durable basis of their interests and affections'.¹⁶ Also, he persuaded the Rani to issue a proclamation to exempt Christians from *uriyam* duties connected with Hindu temples and from supplying provisions to uttupuras or feeding houses for Brahmins.¹⁷

However, the Residents who succeeded Munro were not as zealous as Macaulay and Munro, and under these Residents some policies that were hostile to the missionaries were adopted by the Travancore government. The proclamation of 1829 is one example. It was issued after disturbances broke out over the breast-cloth controversy and contained several anti-missionary elements. It declared that Christian converts were 'not permitted to act towards persons of higher castes contrary to the usages of their own castes before they become Christians'. It prohibited the erection of places of worship without the permission of the Sirkar officers. It also expressly cancelled a former decree which had given Christians freedom to wear their clothes however they liked.¹⁸ Hence, the missionaries felt this measure to be intended to especially frustrate Christian activities.¹⁹

In 1837 J.S. Fraser, the Resident, stated that 'Europeans residing in the territory of Native States, not being servants of the British Government, must be held to be in all respects, and in all cases, Civil and Criminal, subject to the Law of the Country in which they reside'.²⁰ The missionaries sent a memorial in protest to Fraser stating that 'the only acknowledged standard of Criminal Law in Travancore both in the definition of crime, and its punishments is

¹⁵Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 685.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 686.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, Appendix 1.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 843, Appendix p. 1viii.

¹⁹Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India*, p. 145.

²⁰Memorandum of J.S. Fraser, 13 July 1837, MPP, p. 136, April 1859, OIOC.

that of the Dharma Shastram, confessedly barbarious and cruel in many of its provisions'.²¹ However, the situation did not change, and the missionaries had to submit their petition again in 1859 after the breast-cloth disturbances, as will be seen later.

Under these circumstances, the LMS's plan to reside in Trivandrum also encountered many difficulties. The Travancore government repeatedly refused to grant them permission. It was not until 1838 that John Cox, an LMS missionary, was able to settle in Trivandrum and start a mission in the capital of the Hindu state, and significantly this was done with the help of Fraser, the Resident.²²

However, Lieutenant-General W. Cullen (Resident, 1840–60) was almost totally different from his predecessors and was apparently hostile to Christianity. This 'Hindooized' officer held the view that the missionaries aimed at raising 'an independent unconstitutional authority which might unsettle, if not altogether subvert, the existing political arrangements of the native state'.²³ This Resident, according to Samuel Mateer, an LMS missionary, 'though kind and courteous in manners, generous in his gifts, and scientific in his tastes, was completely under the influence of Brahman favourites, adopted their views, and saw no necessity for missionary labours, or the Christian instruction of the poor'.²⁴ The Dewan, Krishna Rao, who was a protégé of Cullen, was also hostile to the missionaries, and it was this Dewan who, writing to the Tahsildar at Tiruwalla in February 1851, laid it down as a general rule that 'Though an Illoowen [Izhava, one of the lower castes] becomes a Christian he must not cease to be an Illoowen'.²⁵ Under these officials the Travancore government in the mid-nineteenth century was obviously 'staunchly Hindu and thoroughly conservative'.²⁶

²¹ Memorial of the English Missionaries in Travancore and Cochin to Governor in Council, 26 Dec. 1837, MPP, p. 138, April 1859, OIOC.

²² Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, pp. 787–8, 876.

²³ John A. Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore* (Nagercoil: Diocesan Press, 1990), p. 121; Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, Introductory Chapter, p. 48.

²⁴ Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 297.

²⁵ Appendix E, MPP, April 1859, p. 144.

²⁶ Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), p. 37.

However, the attitude of the Madras government itself was not so hostile to the missionaries at that time. In the 1850s the missionaries agitated against the social and political problems of Travancore, such as slavery, *uriyam* (forced labour), caste restrictions, (particularly the restriction on the use of breast-cloth) and even the misrule of the Travancore government, and the Madras government responded more or less favourably to the missionary appeals. Among these issues, slavery was one of the most important topics in Travancore in the mid-nineteenth century. In Travancore, the lowest castes such as the Pulayas and the Parayas were slaves, who were largely engaged in agricultural labour. Their owners were the higher castes such as the Nayers and the Syrian Christians. Four years after Act v of 1843, which legally emancipated slaves in British India, the missionaries of the LMS and the CMS presented an address to the Maharaja through the Resident, proposing the immediate emancipation of all slaves in Travancore. However, not surprisingly, the Dewan replied that the emancipation of slaves was 'too important a question to be considered at present'. Thus the missionaries again petitioned in 1848.²⁷

The Madras government also intended to gradually abolish slavery in Travancore and Cochin even though it sometimes criticized the missionaries' rather radical agitations.²⁸ According to the Madras government, the Resident had urged the Dewan of Travancore to adopt measures for the 'gradual emancipation' of all children of the 'Sirkar slaves', the property of the state, who were hired out to cultivators. In May 1850 the Court of Directors of the Company expressed its desire that 'the subject of predial slavery in Travancore and Cochin should receive the serious attention of Government with a view to effecting early emancipation with the least possible injury to individual interests'.²⁹ Accordingly, a proclamation was issued in 1853 that all children of government slaves who might be born subsequently would be free, and finally the total abolition of slavery in Travancore was declared by the Proclamation of 24 June 1855.³⁰

²⁷Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. 1, p. 508; Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 44.

²⁸Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 48.

²⁹Ch. Sec. Fort St. George, to Sec. to the Govt. of India, 9, Mar. 1855, Foreign and Political Proceedings, 5 Apr. 55, NAI.

³⁰Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 509.

Uriyam, forced labour, was another important practice which the missionaries agitated against in the mid-nineteenth century. Although Christians had been legally exempted from performing uriyam for temples or on Sundays largely through the efforts of Resident John Munro, as we have seen, this custom continued in some places. In 1851, Joseph Peet, a CMS missionary, succeeded in getting the exemption proclamation reissued. Some began to avoid uriyam completely and by 1857 uriyam had fallen into disuse in many areas, though the missionaries still demanded the total abolition of this practice in their petition in 1859.³¹

Thus in the 1850s the missionaries were very assertive and enthusiastically attacked existing customs in Travancore, and the British, with the exception of General Cullen, adopted more or less similar attitudes. The Madras government and other British authorities generally did not hesitate to criticize caste or social customs in the mid-nineteenth century. This attitude is most clearly seen in the case of the breast-cloth disturbance.

The Breast-Cloth Disturbance

Among numerous caste restrictions, the breast-cloth restriction was certainly the most controversial. In Travancore, the garment called 'the upper cloth' was allowed to be worn only by Nayar and other high-caste women. It was a light cotton cloth which was worn loosely across the breast and over one shoulder.³² The Shanars and other lower castes such as the Izhavas and Pulayas were forbidden not only to wear the upper cloth but also to cover the upper part of their bodies,³³ and this restriction caused a number of disturbances in the nineteenth century.

In 1829, after some disturbances between the Shanars and Nayars, the Rani issued a proclamation permitting the women of the Shanar converts to wear a jacket called kuppayam like the

³¹Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 57.

³²It was called *tolcilai* in Tamil, the language spoken in southern Travancore. *Tol* means shoulder, and *cilai* cloth. Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 61; Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 797.

³³Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 61; Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 59.

women of the Syrian Christians and Muslims.³⁴ But the Hindu Shanars and other lower castes were prohibited by the 'standing laws' of Travancore from covering their person in 'any way whatever above the waist'.³⁵ However, the Shanar women, particularly those who were converts to Christianity, began to wear a style of dress similar to that worn by 'Soodra and Brahmin females'.³⁶ This led to a disturbance largely between the Shanars and the Nayers in the late 1850s.

The disturbance started on 8 October 1858 when a Christian woman was assaulted in the public market at Neyyattinkara in south Travancore, and it continued for several months. The Nayers attacked the Shanar women who appeared in public in high-caste dress, and the Shanars retaliated. During the disturbance, the Christian converts were molested and harassed, and a number of mission schools, chapels and houses of ordinary Christians were burnt.³⁷ The missionaries were also threatened with assassination.³⁸ James Russell, an LMS missionary, described the disturbance as follows:

During the early months of the year ... For two or three months all was in commotion, anxiety and fear. The schools were entirely broken up. Many of the catechists had left their stations. Some took refuge in the neighbouring province of Tinnevely, while some strive to keep themselves from the power of their oppressors by removing from place to place.³⁹

The causes of this disturbance were rather complex. However, the missionaries' agitation was undoubtedly one of the direct causes. In the annual report for 1858, one missionary stated that he had not yet succeeded in persuading the Christian women to wear a jacket. According to him this was because these women had long neglected to carry out his 'wishes' before 1858. However, in 1858 he 'positively required them to adopt the dress which the law permits and decorum requires'. In particular, on 4 October, four days before the

³⁴Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 525.

³⁵Memorial of the LMS in Travancore to Trevelyan, 18 July 1859, MPP, OIOC; Nagam Aira, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 526.

³⁶Madava Row to Cullen, 12 Feb. 1859, No. 196, MPP, OIOC. In the nineteenth century, the Nayers were frequently called the Sudras or Malayala Sudras.

³⁷*Evangelical Magazine*, June 1859, p. 442.

³⁸Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore*, pp. 128-9; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 526; G.O. No. 75, 27 Jan. 1859, MPP, OIOC.

³⁹Report of the Jamestown Mission District for 1859. India Odds, Box 16, CWMA.

outbreak of the first assault, he dwelt on this subject at a Christian meeting and a 'Dorcus Society' was formed to provide 'proper clothes' for the poor. No sooner did the Christian women 'cloth themselves decently' than the 'Soodras' began to threaten to assault them.⁴⁰ There can be no doubt that this kind of behaviour on the part of the missionaries was one of the immediate causes of the disturbance.

However, needless to say, this was not the only cause of the disturbance. As both the missionaries and Cullen, the Resident, acknowledged, the emancipation of the slaves in 1855 and the spread of Christianity were also important causes. Cullen wrote regarding the complaint of the higher castes who began to lose their privileges that:

I am frequently visited by large numbers of Proprietors, complaining bitterly that they lost the services on Sundays, and that their slaves had in other respects proved very refractory. Another subject of irritation has been the exemption of the part of all Shanars attached to the Mission for Oolium duties on Sundays, and from work connected with Hindoo Festivals or Places of Worship.⁴¹

The missionaries stated in their petition to the Raja that 'they [the high-caste Hindus] openly avow that their object in all this is to destroy the Christian cause in Travancore, and restore society to that state in which it existed previous to the year 1809'.⁴²

Meanwhile, Queen Victoria's Proclamation issued on 1 November 1858 certainly helped to inflame the disturbance, as the Dewan, the Resident and the missionaries all agreed.⁴³ John Dennis, an LMS missionary, stated that 'since the Queen's Proclamation has become known among the people they have ... formed the opinion that the

⁴⁰TDC *Annual Report*, 1858, Trivandrum and Quilon Mission, p. 7.

⁴¹Cullen to Chief Sec., 16 Feb. 1859, No. 19, MPP, 15 Mar. 1859, OIOC; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 297.

⁴²Petition of the Missionaries of the LMS to the Raja of Travancore, 7 Feb. 1859, MPP, OIOC. It was in the year 1809 that the revolt of Velu Thampi, a former Dewan, against the British ended. Thus, the breast-cloth disturbance seems to have involved some anti-British sentiment as well.

⁴³Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore*, pp. 124-5; Madava Row to Cullen, 12 Feb. 1859, No. 196, MPP, OIOC; Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr, 'The Breast-Cloth Controversy: Caste Consciousness and Social Change in Southern Travancore', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 5, 2, 1968, pp. 181-2; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 299.

Queen is opposed to Missions and that she is displeased with all Missionaries'.⁴⁴ In fact, the Proclamation declared that the Queen and her government 'shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native princes'; it ordered British officials and others in authority to 'abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship'; and desired that 'due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India'.⁴⁵ Thus, the Proclamation certainly contained statements which encouraged the high-caste Hindus to feel justified in their behaviour against the Shanars and Christians. In the eyes of the higher castes, the restriction regarding the breast-cloth was an 'ancient custom' related to their religious beliefs, which the British had declared they would respect. Moreover, the custom relating to the breast-cloth had been a matter that was controlled or authorized by Travancore State, again a 'right' which the Queen had declared to respect.

Above all, there was considerable hatred on the part of the Nayers and other higher castes towards the Shanars who were 'year by year rising in intelligence, wealth, and influence',⁴⁶ and this was perhaps the greatest underlying cause of the disturbance. Shungoonny Menon, apparently sympathizing with the higher castes to which he belonged, described how the Shanar converts rendered themselves 'obnoxious to the Sudra community':

For instance, one Shanar Puthathan Cutty and his wife, Eshakee, were the cultivators of Madom Pillay, a Sudra landed proprietor. These became converts and left Madom Pillay's service, and Puthathan Cutty subsequently became a Catechist under a Missionary, and his wife assumed a costume similar to that of Madom Pillay's wife. Now, both the Catechist and his wife came to Madom Pillay's house and began to converse with him, on terms of equality, commencing a discussion with Madom Pillay on the subject of religion and calling him 'an ignorant man' and a sinner ... Was it possible for Madom Pillay not to resent the impertinence of those who were but lately his dependents...⁴⁷

The newly appointed Dewan Madava Row endeavoured to suppress the disturbance. The missionaries greatly appreciated his efforts. The LMS missionaries stated in their petition of 7 February

⁴⁴Report, Nagercoil, 20 Jan. 1859, India Odds Box 16, CWMA.

⁴⁵*Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 18, 1859, Paper No. 110, pp. 296-7.

⁴⁶*Evangelical Magazine*, June 1859, p. 442.

⁴⁷P. Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 507.

1859 that 'we are of the opinion that the Dewan is most anxious to suppress it', and demanded a temporary extension of the Dewan's power in order to deal with the lower officials who were reluctant to suppress the disturbance.⁴⁸

As to the Madras government, they were consistent in their criticism of such caste-based prejudice and demanded that the Travancore government abolish the restrictions. In January 1859, even before the missionaries' first petition to the Raja since the outbreak of this disturbance, the Madras government ordered the Resident to inform the Travancore government that 'such prohibitions as those contained in the Circular Order of May 1814, or in the Proclamation of 3 February 1829, are unsuited to the present age, and unworthy of an enlightened Prince', and stated that the Raja was 'not to look for the support of the British Government in any attempts to maintain them, as respects any class of his subjects'.⁴⁹ The Governor of Madras also stated on 6 May 1859 that:

I have seldom met with a case in which, not only truth and justice, but every feeling of our common humanity are so entirely on one side. The whole civilised world would cry shame upon us if we did not make a firm stand on such an occasion.⁵⁰

Considerable pressure from the Madras government in this way, made the Travancore State decide to issue a proclamation. Madava Row wrote to Cullen on 17 May 1859 regarding a proposed proclamation:

His Highness now proposes to abolish all rules prohibiting the covering of the upper parts of the persons of Shanar women and to grant them perfect liberty to meet the requirements of decency any way they may deem proper, with the simple restriction that they do not imitate the same mode of dress that appertains to the higher castes.⁵¹

However, the LMS missionaries were not satisfied with this proposed proclamation and accordingly petitioned the Madras government on 18 July 1859. They found the proclamation deficient because it dealt with only the women of the Shanar community, while 'the women of the Erluvar, Pariah and some other castes ... are left subject to the same

⁴⁸Petition of the LMS in Travancore to the Rajah, 7 Feb. 1859, p. 133, MPP, OIOC.

⁴⁹G.O. No. 75, 27 Jan. 1859, MPP, OIOC.

⁵⁰Minutes of the President, 7 May 1859, Foreign Dept. File No. Pol. 12 Aug. NAI.

⁵¹Madava Row to Cullen, 17 May 1859, No. 895, MPP, OIOC.

barbarous and indecent restrictions as before'.⁵² But the missionaries clearly did not protest against 'the simple restriction' which prohibited the wearing of clothes similar to those of the higher castes in spite of the fact that this was an obvious inequality. This was probably because it was not the right to imitate the higher castes but the right to wear clothes properly (as they understood it) that the missionaries demanded. Undoubtedly, the missionaries themselves did not want the Shanars to imitate the higher castes, because this imitation may have been seen by the missionaries as the implicit acceptance of the caste system or the dominant caste ideology. Meanwhile, the missionaries dealt with much broader problems in their petition. They objected to restrictions on erecting places of worship; they focussed on the safety aspects of their property and lives; they questioned the partial judicial system; and they dwelt on social issues such as the continuance of slavery even after its official abolition, the system of *uriyam* and various caste restrictions.

Despite the missionaries' petition, the British authorities approved the proposed proclamation, though they regarded the issue of a proclamation as an 'expedient' measure.⁵³ This was undoubtedly because the Madras government compromised with the Travancore government to avoid a sudden change and to preserve public tranquility. It thus accepted at least partly the view of the Raja and the Dewan. Madava Row stated in May 1859 that 'the sudden and total abolition of all distinctions of dress, which have from time immemorial distinguished one caste from another, may produce most undesirable impressions on the minds of the larger portion of his subjects and cause their serious discontent'.⁵⁴ Thus a proclamation was issued on 26 July 1859 which declared that:

Whereas it is our earnest desire to satisfy all parties as far as possible, it is hereby proclaimed, that there is no objection to the rest of the Shanar females wearing the *Cooppayom*, in the same manner as Christian Shanar women, nor to Shanar females of all sects wearing a thick cloth in the way the *Mookoovar* women do, or covering their bosom in any other manner, provided they avoid adopting the dress used by the women of the higher castes.⁵⁵

⁵²Memorial of the LMS in Travancore to Trevelyan, 18 July 1859, MPP, OIOC.

⁵³G.O. No. 347, 6 Jun. 1859, MPP, OIOC; Sec. of State for India to Governor in Council, Fort St. George, 19 Aug. 1859, MPP, OIOC.

⁵⁴Madava Row to Cullen, 17 May 1859, No. 895, MPP, OIOC.

⁵⁵H. Drury to Ch. Sec., 30 Sep 1859, MPP, p. 99, OIOC.

At that time, however, the Madras government was determined to abolish caste prejudices and introduce 'civilization', even though it sometimes compromised with Travancore State as well as with the higher castes and others.⁵⁶ In November 1859, four months after the proclamation, the Governor of Madras expressed his hope that 'the time is not far distant when His Highness the Rajah will abolish all legal restrictions upon female dress in his dominions'. In December 1859, more than six months after the suppression of the disturbance, the Governor still showed a great interest in inequality based on caste in Travancore and expressed his view in his memorandum to the newly appointed Resident, Francis Maltby:

It may seem to some a small matter whether the women of the inferior castes in Travancore are allowed to dress as they like or not; but, in one point of view, it is extremely important. This is no sumptuary law, but *a badge of degradation*. The maintenance or withdrawal of the restriction, is also *a trial of strength* between the old caste domination and the advancing forces of liberty and civilization.⁵⁷

Accordingly the Governor demanded that 'a decisive course should be adopted', and that the Resident should tell the Raja that 'such a barbarism is unknown in any other country in the world, and that nothing short of the entire removal of all restrictions, leaving the females to dress as they think fit, will satisfy the Government both here and at home. ... and that even if the use of cold steel is necessary this will be afforded'.⁵⁸

Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, however, criticized the expression 'the use of cold steel' and stated that 'such language as this does not rightly embody the views of Her Majesty's Government'. But, otherwise, his policy was very similar to the policy of the Governor of Madras. Wood stated in July 1860 that 'it is my desire that the British Resident at Travancore exercise his moral influence with the Rajah to induce him to remove all existing restrictions on the dress of the female inhabitants of the country, by such means as are not likely to disturb the public tranquility'.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Minute by Walter Elliot, 3 Mar. 1859, MPP, 15 Mar. 1859, p. 285, OIOC.

⁵⁷Minute by the President, No. 15, 19 Dec. 1859, MPP, OIOC, p. 240, emphasis in original.

⁵⁸Memorandum of subjects discussed at the interview with Trevelyan, 7 Dec. 1859, MPP, OIOC.

⁵⁹C. Wood to Governor, Fort St. George, 24 July 1860, MPP, 28 Aug 1860, OIOC.

Consequently a similar proclamation was issued in 1864 regarding the clothes worn by the females of the Izhava and other low castes.⁶⁰

It is true that, as the above statement of Wood suggests, to preserve 'the public tranquility' was one of the most important policies of the British after the Mutiny. However, as far as Travancore was concerned, the British were against caste discrimination which was sometimes regarded as barbaric or against 'liberty and civilization'. In this sense the Queen's Proclamation did not have much effect in shaping the policies of the British in Travancore in the early 1860s.

The rather aggressive attitude of the British authorities towards the existing social customs was undoubtedly what the missionaries desired. The missionaries were also very vocal in their criticism of what they considered social problems in Travancore such as slavery and caste prejudice. Thus the British authorities and the missionaries had, in a sense, a common view of the social customs in Travancore in the mid-nineteenth century and the missionaries could largely expect, and did receive, the practical support of the British authorities.

William Lee's Case and Caste Disabilities

The attitude of the British authorities did not change in the 1860s and 1870s, and this is clearly seen in the case of an LMS missionary who was assaulted by Brahmins in south Travancore. The incident occurred in a Brahmin village (called an *agraharam*), which was 'situated in an isolated country place' and was 'entirely a series of Brahmin houses closely packed'.⁶¹ Usually, the lower castes and foreigners were not allowed to pass through the village. However, William Lee, a missionary of the LMS, tried to go through the *agraharam* in south Travancore and was assaulted by the Brahmins. This incident caught the attention of the Madras government. It strongly denounced the Travancore government for being reluctant to punish the offenders.

The incident occurred on 16 August 1868 when Rev. William Lee tried to pass through an *agraharam* called Punjalingapuram, on his way to a village in south Travancore. When he approached the *agraharam*, several Brahmins tried to persuade him to use another

⁶⁰Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 305.

⁶¹Madava Row to Resident, 5 Nov. 1868, MPP, OIOC.

pathway and he respected their wishes so as not to 'hurt the feelings of the people'. But, on his return journey, he passed through the Brahmin village since the other road was 'very rough and troublesome'. He and his horsekeeper, 'a pariah', were then assaulted.⁶² The Madras government described this assault, certainly relying heavily on the account of the missionary himself:

... the Brahmin threw 'a copper-vessel' at him, and beat his horsekeeper with a rope. The bystanders took part in the assault by throwing stones which struck Mr Lee, his horsekeeper, and his pony, but in spite of this, they passed through the street and rejoined, at the other side of the village, certain Catechists and others who had gone round by the way Mr Lee had declined to take. Mr Lee returned on foot to the village, however, in search of a small leather bag which his horsekeeper was carrying and had dropped in the melee, and while he was 'parleying with the people' regarding his missing property a Brahmin struck him 'with his hand over the left cheek-bone' and 'several others also struck' him 'over the head with sticks'.⁶³

The Travancore government was reluctant to punish the Brahmins. In fact, the offenders were just fined Rs 30 each, which was, according to the Resident, 'certainly no great burden upon these wealthy Brahmins'.⁶⁴ The Travancore government's view of this incident was that the aghraharam purported to be private property which had been donated to the Brahmins; therefore, the Brahmins of the village 'were entitled to deny to the public the right of way through the main street of the village, until such right of way was declared by a Court of Law'; and they also had the right to prevent their homes from being desecrated in 'self-defence'.⁶⁵ Therefore, according to Madava Row, 'it was the duty of Mr Lee, under the circumstances, to avoid risking so probable a breach of the peace'.⁶⁶ The Dewan also criticized the missionaries' attitude in general and stated that:

some of the Missionary gentlemen would ... seem to be under the impression that it would be quite lawful for them to take upon themselves the enforce-

⁶²G.O. No. 284, 11 Sep. 1869, MPP, OIOC.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴H. Newill to Ch. Sec., 22 Dec. 1868, No. 80, MPP, OIOC.

⁶⁵Madava Row to Resident, 5 Nov. 1868, MPP, OIOC.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

ment of rights like that in question, even to the extent of shooting down those that would resist such action.⁶⁷

However, the Madras government criticized these views and stated that in the Madras Presidency and other parts of Travancore, 'Men of all castes and nationalities' passed every day through 'streets exclusively inhabited by Brahmins' and approached their wells and pagodas. It accordingly ordered the Resident to 'strongly urge His Highness the adoption for the future' of the principle that 'The public high streets of all towns are the property, not of any particular caste, but of the whole community, and that every man, be his caste or religion what it may, has a right to the full use of them'.⁶⁸ Moreover, the Governor of Madras blamed Madava Row for not having used the appropriate 'terms of respect and courtesy' in referring to the missionaries.⁶⁹

This case caused the Madras government to pay more attention to caste inequalities in Travancore, and in September 1869, about a year after the assault, it ordered the Resident to furnish 'a report upon any substantial disabilities or oppression to which the lowest castes in Travancore are still practically subjected'.⁷⁰ Six months after this order, G.A. Ballard, the Resident, submitted a report in which he itemized the disabilities as follows:

1. They [the lowest castes] are not permitted to use roads open to the public of higher castes.
2. They are not permitted to enter or approach within a certain distance of many Courts and public offices.
3. They are excluded from the Government Schools.
4. They are excluded from public service.⁷¹

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸G.O. No. 284, 11 Sep. 1869, MPP, OIOC.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.* The Madras government also stated with regard to education that 'the establishment of separate government schools for high and low caste pupils is most strongly to be deprecated as tending to sanction the continuance of distinctions which are most injurious to the progress of people of Travancore'. As will be seen in the next chapter, in 1875, five years later, the Travancore government started to give a great deal of grant-in-aid to the missionaries' institutions, which eventually reduced the responsibility of the government towards education for the lower castes and helped the government to avoid the confusion in government schools which could have occurred by admitting the lower caste students. G.O. No. 143, 23 April 1870, MPP, OIOC.

⁷¹Ballard to Acting Ch. Sec., 9 Mar. 1870, MPP, 23 April 1870, OIOC.

The Madras government, considering these disabilities as 'a serious blot upon the high character which the administration of Travancore has gained',⁷² urged it to abolish these practices. They also compared the situation in Travancore with that in British Malabar and stated that 'The same prejudices, the same difficulties have ... been completely overcome under British rule in the District of Malabar, where the caste[s] affected are much the same as in Travancore'.⁷³ As a result, the Travancore government decided to make law courts accessible to 'all classes' in 1870 and also issued a circular throwing open most of the public roads in Travancore to all castes and communities, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.⁷⁴

However, it is also certain that the Madras government did not issue these orders without considering the existing social order or the nature of the Hindu state. In fact, it made many compromises. It agreed to exclude from the order roads which passed 'too close to an important place of particular sanctity'. As regards the opening of the public service related to the devaswom and uttupura, it was suggested that separate institutions be formed instead of opening the government service completely to the lower castes.⁷⁵ Moreover, it seems important that the Travancore government apparently ignored some of the above 'advice' in practice. It was not until 1910 that the government declared open government schools for the avarna castes in accordance with the Education Code, and it was only in 1922, about half a century later, that the devaswom was separated from the Revenue Department.⁷⁶

However, although the policy of the Madras government contained a number of compromises, it is still true that it was firmly against caste prejudices and was determined to get rid of them from Travancore. Hence it resolutely intervened in the existing social and religious customs of Travancore.

⁷²G.O. No. 143, 23 April 1870, MPP, OIOC.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴Dewan to Judges, 7 Apr. 1870, in G.O. No. 158, 9 May 1870, MPP, OIOC; 'The Pulayas of Travancore', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Apr. 1883, p. 202.

⁷⁵Dewan to Judges, 7 Apr. 1870, in G.O. No. 158, 9 May 1870, MPP, OIOC.

⁷⁶P. Rajagopalachari, *Note on the Administration of Travancore* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1914, p. 53-4; Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1940), vol. 1, p. 573.

A Petition from the Native Christians

However, the attitude of the Madras government towards caste disabilities apparently changed towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s, free access to certain streets and villages was still denied to the lower castes and to the Christians from these avarna castes in many places. In order to improve this situation, the native Christians of south Travancore, at the instance of a number of LMS missionaries, petitioned the Travancore and Madras governments as well as the Government of India. In the petition to the Madras government, they requested that the proclamation and circular which were issued after the Lee case be enforced. They criticized the British Resident and stated that 'he did nothing towards carrying out the British Government order' even after receiving their petitions 'several times'.⁷⁷

In fact, J.C. Hannington (Resident, 1881-92) was far more sympathetic towards the higher castes than towards the Christians from the lower castes. Regarding the petitions from the Christians, he wrote to the Madras government in 1887:

I am myself sorry that Hindus—and especially educated Hindus—should hold views which appear to me to be absurd, but I should be sorry willingly to offend their prejudices, and I have no doubt the Hindu exercises the same tolerance towards me in respect to many things which I do, which appear to him to be not merely absurd, but wicked.⁷⁸

The British Resident therefore had no intention of intervening in matters related to streets reserved for Brahmins or aghahams in the late 1880s. The Madras government took the same attitude, at least in practice. After receiving this letter from Hannington, the Madras government concluded that 'no action is necessary'.⁷⁹ There is no question that this attitude was very different from the attitude of the Madras government in the Lee case in the 1860s.

Realizing that nothing was being done, the Christians sent their petition to the Secretary of State for India in London in February 1891. The petitioners demanded that a proclamation be issued by the Travancore government for 'free access into all streets and villages'.⁸⁰ But

⁷⁷S. Parinbanayaga Margunden and other native Christians in south Travancore, to Governor in Council, 7 Oct. 1887, G.O. No. 925, 8 Dec. 1887, MPP, OIOC.

⁷⁸Hannington to Ch. Sec., 24 Nov. 1887, MPP, OIOC.

⁷⁹G.O. No. 925, 8 Dec. 1887, MPP, OIOC.

⁸⁰Petition, 19 Feb. 1891, G.O. No. 4, 26, June 1891, MPP, OIOC.

the Madras government was firmly against the Christians. In answer to the enquiry from London, it stated that 'the Circular of 21st July 1884' of the Travancore government was enough. This circular had notified that 'the courts and cutcherries [government offices] of the State and all public roads and market-places should be open to all persons without distinction'. The Madras government wrote:

More than this cannot be expected, and, as observed by Mr Hannington, the petitioners in reality seek the abolition of the religious prejudice which is so strong in Travancore and the neighbouring State of Cochin and which may be expected to prevail at all times...In these circumstances, we cannot recommend any action in favour of the memorialist.⁸¹

Thus the Madras government seems to have been determined to not intervene in the social and religious customs of Travancore by the late nineteenth century. Consequently, its attitude towards the missionaries and Christians became unfavourable compared with the 1850s and 1860s which we have already examined. This change in attitude towards social and religious customs at the time can be seen more clearly in the case of civil disabilities regarding the rights of inheritance of Christian converts from among the Hindus.

Inheritance Law and Civil Disabilities

Almost at the same time as the Christians in south Travancore petitioned for the free use of public streets, the missionaries advanced the claim for the inheritance rights of Christian converts. In Travancore as well as in Cochin and Mysore, Christian converts from Hinduism lost all rights of inheritance, while in British India and other princely states, they acquired the rights after the introduction of Act xxi of 1850. The Travancore government issued a proclamation in 1869 and announced that converts were entitled to rights of inheritance when a deceased person left no heirs except converts.⁸² But in most cases, converts to Christianity and other religions received no property or support from his family.

The missionaries of both the LMS and CMS strongly demanded the introduction of this act in these princely states, and the question

⁸¹Wenlock, J.C. Dormer, H.E. Stokes, J.H. Garstin, to Sec. of State for India, 26 June 1891, in G.O. No. 4, 26 June 1891, MPP, OIOC.

⁸²Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, Vol. III, p. 568.

was frequently raised in the 1890s. This was at least partly because the missionaries began to show more interest in the higher castes and to realize that this was one of the main problems that prevented the conversion of the higher castes. E.J. Edmonds, an LMS missionary, stated that this inability was 'a great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel'.⁸³ The controversy continued for more than a decade. The Travancore and the Cochin government, not surprisingly, strongly opposed the extension of this code. Eventually, no measure was adopted to secure the rights of converts from Hinduism.

One of the earliest substantial actions of the missionaries regarding this matter began in 1887. In this year, the LMS missionaries sent a memorial to the Maharaja⁸⁴ and in 1888 the Travancore government received a memorial from the CMS,⁸⁵ after which the Travancore government appointed a committee of five public officers. Two of them subsequently became Dewans, while four were, or had been, judges of the Travancore High Court.⁸⁶ The committee submitted a report in March 1889, which discussed the matter largely in the cases of the Hindus who followed the *marumakkattayam* (matrilineal inheritance) and the *makkattayam* (patrilineal inheritance). The former was largely followed by the Nayers, and the latter by the Brahmins. According to the report, the *marumakkattayam* law and usage 'treat the family as a corporation' and 'allow no partition', though each member had a right to be maintained in the house. Therefore, unless a convert became civilly dead, he had to be accommodated in the house. However, this situation would be a difficult one to cope with for the Hindu members of the family. The presence of a convert in the house could 'not fail to cause endless annoyance to himself and his Hindu sheshakars [relatives], and lead to constant disputes and ruinous litigation'. The report continued to state that the adoption of the law in British India 'would affect the throne itself', as the ruling family also followed the *marumakkattayam* law. In other words, Travancore might have a Christian Maharaja unless converts were excluded from the in-

⁸³Quilon, 1899, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁸⁴Petition to Maharajah, J. Duthie to Ag. Resident, 15 July 1887, G.O. No. 295, 15 June 1889, MPP, OIOC.

⁸⁵Rama Row to C.A. Neve, May 1889, G.O. No. 295, 15 June 1889, MPP, OIOC.

⁸⁶Despatch from Sec. of State for India, No. 57, 5 July 1901, Foreign Department Notes, May 1902, Nos. 116-25, NAI.

heritance. The committee also emphasized that Hinduism was the established religion of the state.⁸⁷

Regarding the makkattayam law of the Brahmins and others, the committee admitted that the law allowed partition and recognized individual rights. However, the report insisted that 'all rights of succession to property are based upon competency to perform certain religious rites', especially the funeral rites which were 'essential to one's salvation'. Since as an individual could not adopt a son unless his real son was regarded as civilly dead, the adoption of this law in British India would cause a serious problem.⁸⁸ In other words, 'To a man who believes in the efficacy of funeral rites it must be most harassing to feel on his death-bed that the conversion of his only son, without the power to substitute another by adoption, has deprived him of his salvation'.⁸⁹ Thus the committee unanimously concluded that 'it is highly inexpedient to grant the prayer of the memorialist, which would involve a serious infraction of the rights of the unconverted members of a Hindu family'.⁹⁰

However, in addition to these mainly legal matters, there were undoubtedly more serious problems for the Hindus and the state. The introduction of the new law would not only get rid of a great hindrance to conversion to Christianity and other religions but would also more positively promote conversion: by becoming a Christian, the partition of the family property, which was by custom impartible, would become much easier. Undoubtedly this was one of the great concerns of the state, which the British also well recognized. Clearly on the side of the high-caste Hindus and Travancore State, Lord Curzon (Viceroy, 1899-1905) wrote in 1901:

One fine day the Missionaries come along and persuade some miserable Hindu (usually the scum of creation) to become a convert. They then claim that he should take his share out of the family property, and break down the Native system of inheritance in his individual interest. Of course, in practice, this is a premium on conversion; for, if every Native knows that he can make into his own property what was previously corporate property, it will be a great incentive to the missionary propaganda.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Lee-Warner Collections, 'Christian Converts', MSS Eur. F. 92/18, OIOC.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ To Dewan, 13 March 1889, Intl-B, Dec 1898, Foreign Dept. NAI.

⁹¹ Curzon to Godley, 9 Apr, 1901, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur F/111/160, OIOC.

Meanwhile, after 1889, the question of the disadvantages faced by converts was raised from time to time by the Madras government, undoubtedly as a result of continuous petitions from the missionaries. At first its attitude was not completely unsympathetic to the missionaries and Christian converts. Considering that the committee's report was 'not likely to meet with general acceptance', the Madras government, in 1895, instructed the Resident 'to advise the Darbars [the governments of the princely states] to introduce a regulation "securing to a Nayar convert to Christianity his right to maintenance from his tarwad [the Nayar joint-family] property, whilst declaring him at the same time ineligible, by reason of his change of faith, to become the Karnavan [the manager] of the tarwad or the trustee of a Hindu institution"'.⁹² Both the Travancore and Cochin governments were however strongly opposed to even this modification and did not accept any change regarding the inheritance law. There was also 'a plaintive appeal' by the Raja of Cochin himself.⁹³ Thus the 'advice' of the British Resident was practically ignored.

Recognizing the failure of the previous petitions, the missionary societies in England, including the CMS and the LMS, sent a memorial to the Viceroy in 1897.⁹⁴ The Madras government in their reply to the enquiry by the Government of India, stated that 'The Travancore and Cochin States were both opposed to the introduction of the proposed modified legislation and that the Governor did not propose to proceed with it'.⁹⁵ The Government of India approved this policy and stated that 'the introduction of even very modified legislation on the lines of Act XXI of 1850 is quite unsuited to the condition of Travancore and Cochin'.⁹⁶

But the missionaries were keen to pursue this matter at the time. Even after this decision, they sent a number of memorials to the governments of both India and Madras, but the policy did not

⁹²From Secretary of State, 30 Mar. 1901, Foreign Dept. Notes, Intl., May 25, p. 2, NAI.

⁹³Despatch from Sec. of State for India, No. 57, 5 July 1901, Foreign Department Notes, May 1902, Nos. 116-125, NAI.

⁹⁴Memorial from certain Missionary Societies in England, Intl-B, Dec 1898, Foreign Dept., NAI.

⁹⁵From Secretary of State, 30 Mar. 1901, Foreign Dept. Notes, Intl., May 25, p. 2, NAI.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

change. Apparently, it was far more important for the British authorities to maintain the existing social order than to make happy the Christian converts. The Madras government in 1901 criticized the legislation of Act xxi of 1850:

Act xxi of 1850 ... became law at a time when the policy of impartial recognition of all existing religious systems had not yet been declared. The provision of the Act undermine the leading principle of the Hindu religious system, and its enactment at the present day in British India would unquestionably be regarded as a flagrant violation of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858.⁹⁷

Thus the attitude of the British authorities towards social problems in Travancore greatly changed during the second half of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly the British became much more sensitive to the religious feelings of the people and tried to avoid anything which might be regarded as a measure of support for the missionaries. According to the Chief Secretary to the Madras government, the demand from the missionaries was 'obviously made for proselytizing purposes, and any action which Government take in the direction of complying with that demand will and can only be regarded as that of proselytizing power'.⁹⁸ Hence 'intervention by the British Government in this matter is not only unnecessary but both on general and political grounds undesirable'.⁹⁹

Lord Curzon also expressed a similar view. As we have seen, Curzon strongly opposed the introduction of Act xxi of 1850 in Travancore. With regard to this matter, he also stated that 'we must be very punctilious in dealing with the religious and customary scruples of Native populations'.¹⁰⁰ It may be true that, as S.R. Ashton has pointed out, 'Under Curzon, British intervention in the internal affairs of the [princely] states reached its zenith'.¹⁰¹ But it is also certain that even Curzon was very cautious when dealing with the religious feelings of Indians and tried to avoid intervening in such matters.

⁹⁷ Stokes to H.S. Barnes, Letter No. 600, 9 Oct. 1901, MPP, OIOC.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Curzon to Hamilton, 1 Apr. 1907, Curzon Papers, MSS Eur F/111/160, OIOC.

¹⁰¹ S.R. Ashton, *British Policy towards the Indian States, 1905-1939* (New Delhi: Selectbook Service Syndicate, 1985), p. 24.

The Madras government did not adopt any favourable policy for the Christian converts who continued to be denied rights to ancestral property in Travancore as well as in Cochin and Mysore. This also means that it became more difficult for the missionaries to obtain support from the Madras government which increasingly tried to avoid being seen as a 'proselytizing power', faced as it was with the emergence of Hindu revivalism and Indian nationalism. This situation certainly allowed, to a great extent, the Travancore government to adopt more conservative policies in the 1890s, as will be seen next.

The Changing Attitude of Travancore State

While the missionaries raised the question of the inheritance rights of Christian converts and, by doing so, challenged the existing social order in the 1890s, the Travancore government seems to have become more conservative and hostile to the missionaries. It adopted a number of anti-missionary policies, and the missionaries had virtually no support from the British authorities in these cases as well. The enactment of the Travancore Penal Code is one such example.

The Penal Code Bill was finally passed by the Travancore Legislative Council in 1896. Section 182 of this code prohibited the erection of a place of worship without the sanction of the government. It became a criminal offence from 1899 and offenders were punished with 'a term not exceeding one year or with fine not exceeding five hundred rupees or both'.¹⁰² The official reason for this enactment was to prevent 'sectional strifes and riots'.¹⁰³ But this was considered an anti-Christian measure by the missionaries.

Although this code invoked a great deal of opposition from the missionaries, it was not the first attempt by Travancore State to control the erection of places of worship. As we have seen, the Rani had issued a proclamation in order to settle the 'quarrels' between the Shanars and Nayars as early as in 1829, and, by the 4th clause of the proclamation, free erection of *chattrams* [rest houses largely for the higher castes], churches, schoolrooms, mosques and all other

¹⁰²Copy of Memorial sent to Madras Govt., Knowles to Thompson, 11 July 1898, Folder 6, TL Box 18, CWMA.

¹⁰³J.D. Reeds to Ch. Sec., 26 Nov. 1896, MPP, OIOC.

places of worship was prohibited.¹⁰⁴ This clause, however, had not worked in practice, and most churches and other places of worship had been erected 'without any reference to the proclamation in question'.¹⁰⁵ Therefore the new Penal Code Bill greatly shocked the missionaries.

On 5 May 1896 the missionaries of the CMS and the LMS sent a memorial to the Legislative Council of Travancore and insisted that 'riots and bloodshed' had not arisen from the erection of these places. To the missionaries it was clear that this measure had been adopted to prevent the spread of Christianity. They stated in the memorial that:

whereas the erection of Hindu temples on quite new sites are [sic] of rare occurrence, the Christian population is a growing one ... Consequently, the new law would affect the Hindu community in a very small degree, while it would certainly hinder the progress of Christianity and so could not fail to produce the impression that it was intended to do so.¹⁰⁶

In addition the missionaries were also afraid that all the Tahsildars, who practically had the right to sanction or refuse the construction of religious buildings, were high-caste Hindus and therefore 'Christians would be continually subjected to persecution'.¹⁰⁷

The Madras government did not show much sympathy with the cause of the missionaries this time as well and, in fact, almost ignored the their petition. After receiving a copy of the missionaries' petition to the Legislative Council from the Resident, the Madras government stated in its order relating to clause 182 of this code that 'The Resident will see that this section is not unfairly worked as regards Christians'.¹⁰⁸ After this, the missionaries sent a memorial directly to the Madras government but they received a similar reply.¹⁰⁹ Thus this clause, which was undoubtedly peculiar to Travancore and Cochin,¹¹⁰ was finally enforced and from 1899

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵Memorial of the CMS and the LMS, to Travancore Legislative Council, 5 May 1896, in G.O. No. 565, 24 Aug. 1897, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸G.O. No. 565, 24 Aug. 1897, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁰⁹Knowles to Thompson, 20 Sep. 1898, Folder 6, TL Box 18, CWMA.

¹¹⁰The Travancore and Missions in Travancore State, W.A. Garstin, File No. 454-P(s)/36, FPP, NAI.

building of places of worship without permission became a criminal offence.¹¹¹

As will be seen in the next chapter, the education reforms of 1894 were seen by the missionaries as an anti-Christian policy on the part of the Travancore government. In 1901–02, the Travancore government also decided to prohibit the use of readers and text-books other than the approved ones, and at about the same time ordered that no religious education be given during school hours. Hence anti-missionary policies were obviously adopted during the 1890s and early 1900s and these policies were practically supported by the Madras government which was reluctant to intervene in the social and religious customs of the princely states at the time. Accordingly, almost all the petitions of the missionaries were rejected by the British authorities.

As to the attitude of Travancore State towards the missionaries, the change of Dewan from T. Rama Row to S. Shungarasubbier in 1892 was one of the most obvious signs of this shift. Rama Row was educated at the Nagercoil Seminary of the LMS and 'had a wonderful knowledge of the Bible'.¹¹² When he was a Dewan Peishkar (an officer directly below the Dewan in rank), Rama Row helped the missionaries to hold an evening school among the prisoners in jail. Samuel Mateer stated in his annual report for 1877 that 'We are much indebted to the kind and liberal countenance of the Dewan Peishkar ... for the continuance of this school'.¹¹³ Also, after his retirement, Rama Row built a hospital and a school to be handed over to the management of the LMS.¹¹⁴ However, the next Dewan, S. Shungarasubbier, 'came into office distinctly opposed to mission work' and stayed in office until 1898.¹¹⁵ During his Dewanship, a number of policies directed against the missionaries were adopted.

¹¹¹ Knowles to Thompson, 5 Dec. 1898, TL Box 18, CWMA.

¹¹² Painter, 'The CMS and the Depressed Classes', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, May 1904, p. 339.

¹¹³ Quilon, 1877, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

¹¹⁴ *LMS Annual Report*, 111th, 1906, p. 130.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

The British adopted at least two contradictory policies regarding social and religious customs in India: the policies based on a 'civilizing mission' and 'religious neutrality'. In fact, the notion of the 'civilizing mission' was prevalent in the nineteenth century among the British, who generally believed in their own superiority and viewed Indian customs as 'barbarious'. However, British officials also had to give careful consideration to the fact that interference with Indian social and religious customs could cause social disturbances and resistance to British rule. In the first half of the nineteenth century, these two views existed concurrently in the colonial administration. There seems to have been no rigid policy regarding the priority to be accorded to the two notions. This was perhaps the principal reason why the attitude of the Company towards the missionaries was 'curiously inconsistent and self-contradictory'.¹¹⁶

It is true that Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 was one of the important turning points in British policy towards princely states as well as towards social and religious customs in India. As we have seen, this proclamation clearly declared that the British government would respect the rights of the princes and the customs of India. However, at least as far as British policy towards Travancore was concerned, this proclamation did not have much effect in the 1860s and 1870s. The British authorities, including the Madras government, seem to have been more interested at the time in the idea of the introduction of what they called 'civilization'. In fact, they intervened rather enthusiastically against caste prejudices, even though they avoided radical reforms in order to maintain 'public tranquility'. In effect, the attitude of the British authorities was largely congruent with that of the missionaries at the time. The missionaries also strongly criticized the existing social order and endeavoured to abolish certain practices such as slavery. In this sense, the missionaries enjoyed a favourable relationship with the British authorities, even though the British, except for a few very 'zealous' Residents, avoided taking part in the missionaries' activities directly.

¹¹⁶Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, p. 149. Penelope Carson has also claimed that the East India Company never had an 'official' policy on missionaries. 'An Imperial Dilemma: The Propagation of Christianity in Early Colonial India', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 18, 2 (1990), p. 170.

However, from the late nineteenth century onwards, the British mostly abandoned their policy of 'civilizing' the natives and adopted the principle of non-interference in the social and religious customs of at least Travancore. In other words, one of the main ideas of the Queen's Proclamation gradually had an effect upon the colonial administration in the 1880s and 1890s.

Not surprisingly, this situation was largely unfavourable for the missionaries. It became very difficult for them to achieve their goals because of pressure from the Madras government on Travancore State, as the case of the inheritance law clearly shows. Consequently, the missionaries seem to have come to pay more regard to the Maharaja and his government. The difference of attitude between Samuel Mateer and I.H. Hacker, both of whom were LMS missionaries, illustrates the change. In 1871, Mateer stated that Travancore was, 'though nominally an independent state', 'in reality ... tributary to the British Government'.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, thirty-six years later, Hacker stated that the Maharaja 'has his own administration ... and ... has perfect freedom in the management of his own affairs'.¹¹⁸

After the British openly adopted a policy of non-interference in the early twentieth century, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the situation became much worse for the missionaries. In the 1930s especially as will be seen in Chapter 5 the missionaries became very careful about petitioning the British authorities as they feared that it might provoke much greater hostility towards them.

Meanwhile, as the principle of non-interference with the social and religious customs was largely followed, the attitude of Travancore State towards the missionaries also changed greatly. In the 1890s in particular the Travancore government adopted a number of anti-missionary policies. However, it was still true that Travancore State needed the missionaries' help in areas such as education and medicine and it was partly for this reason that the relationship between the missionaries and the state did not become worse at least until the 1930s. In the next two chapters we will examine how the missionaries and Travancore State co-operated and competed in the areas of education and medicine.

¹¹⁷Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 66.

¹¹⁸I.H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore* p. 11.

Chapter 3

Education: Compromise and Competition

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 1, Travancore was 'a purely Hindu state' which was dedicated to Sri Padmanabha in the eighteenth century. This dedication was undoubtedly the most important ideological basis for the legitimacy of the Maharaja's rule. The Maharajas, as servants of this tutelary god, performed a number of state rituals, provided 'charities' for Brahmins and undertook the management of the temples. Protecting Hinduism was one of the main concerns of the Maharajas and their government. Therefore the activities of the missionaries were naturally considered as being by nature harmful to the state. The missionaries not only criticized existing social and religious customs but also tried to convert as many Hindus as possible to Christianity. In fact, they acquired a huge number of converts in Travancore. Hence the Hindu state and the Christian missionaries potentially had a very strained relationship.

However, their relationship did not deteriorate considerably. On the contrary, they almost always maintained a favourable relationship and this aspect of their relations has not been paid enough attention to. The missionaries often praised the 'enlightened' Maharajas, and the state provided a large amount of donations and grants to the missionaries. This was largely because the state compromised with the missionaries for the purpose of 'modernization'. To the state which was trying to transform itself into a 'modern state', missionary educational and medical activities were extremely useful. The Hindu state not only permitted missionary activities but also helped by giving donations and grants. Travancore State thus took a kind of 'ambivalent' attitude towards the missionaries. On the one hand, the state compromised and used the services of the missionaries, but, on the other hand, it tried to reduce their influence so as to protect the basis of the Hindu state. In this chapter, we will

examine the policies the Travancore government adopted in the area of education and how this 'ambivalent' relationship, which was composed of both compromise and competition, changed due to these policies largely from the 1860s to the 1910s.

Indigenous Education

The Maharaja of Travancore as well as other Hindu kings in India patronized the education of Brahmins as 'a duty enjoined by the Dharma Shastras', and this patronage attracted a large number of Brahmins from the Tamil districts.¹ But until the 1830s, the Travancore government had almost no interest in the education of ordinary people. Education was usually imparted to these people by *asans*, village schoolmasters, in indigenous schools normally called 'pial' schools. The *asans* belonged to various castes including the Ambalavasi, Sudra (or Nayar) and Izhava. The teachers depended on support from parents who usually paid in kind. As to the education of girls, the Census Report of 1891 stated that 'Female education in this part of the peninsula is of ancient origin ... No Travancore girl is permitted to grow up to womanhood without a fair knowledge of reading and writing'.² However, although girls were educated together with boys in the indigenous schools, the number seems not to have been large. In most of these schools, according to a book written in 1871 by Samuel Mateer of the LMS, there were 'from 20 to 30 or more boys', and 'from 2 to 4 or 5 Sudra and Ilavar girls'.³

Not surprisingly, Travancore State regarded these schools as inferior institutions, especially after the 1860s, when it started to establish a number of government vernacular schools. In 1889-90, for example, the Administration Report stated that 'They cannot by any means be regarded as valuable instruments for the regeneration of the masses'.⁴ However a large number of indigenous schools

¹Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1906), vol. II, pp. 445-5.

²*Report of the Census of Travancore for 1891*, vol. I, Report (Madras: Addison, 1894), pp. 484-5.

³Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London: John Snow, 1871), p. 154.

⁴TAR, 1889-90, p. 149.

survived until the early twentieth century, and the state came to be increasingly concerned as to how these schools could be upgraded.

The First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Until the 1860s, missionary institutions dominated in the area of western education in Travancore. In 1865–66, for example, the government schools had only 1067 pupils, while the LMS had 8081 and the CMS 2209.⁵ The missionaries also had a strong influence on government institutions. The case of the Raja's Free School is one example. The establishment of this school at Trivandrum was the first attempt by the Travancore government to introduce western-style education. The Raja, after visiting the Nagercoil Seminary of the LMS, invited John Roberts, the Headmaster of the Seminary, to start an English school at the state capital. This was at first a 'private school', though the fees of the students were paid by the government. But this school was soon taken over by the Travancore government and was established as the Raja's Free School in December 1836. Roberts worked as Headmaster until he retired in 1855. The number of students rose above 500 in 1864. In 1866, it was divided into the Junior and Senior Department, and the Senior Department became a college. V. Nagam Aiya, one of the most influential government officials in the Travancore government, was the first graduate from this college.⁶

Roberts was a non-commissioned officer of the Artillery at Quilon. He then became a teacher of the CMS School at Alleppey and after that Headmaster of the Nagercoil Seminary. He was thus not a missionary but he was certainly interested in the spread of Christianity. He requested the Raja to give permission for Bible education by the Christian teachers in the School.⁷ His request was accepted, and this practice continued until at least about the turn of the century. In 1908 I.H. Hacker of the LMS stated that Scripture teaching in the government schools was carried on 'until quite recent years'.⁸ In other words, Travancore State continued to allow

⁵TAR, 1865–66, p. 59. In addition, Catholics and Syrians had 5917 pupils in 1865–66.

⁶Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 447–8.

⁷C.M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore* (1903, reprinted New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1990), p. 725; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 155

⁸I.H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore* (London: H.R. Allenson, 1908), p. 39.

the students, many of whom would become government officials, to learn about Christianity in school. Along with this central institution, the Travancore government opened several District English Schools. Roberts supervised these schools too. But from 1855, the District Schools were looked after by Charles Mead, a former LMS missionary. He was appointed Superintendent of Education in that year and made efforts to revive some of the District Schools.⁹

The Travancore government thus started several schools to give English education to its people in the first half of the nineteenth century. But this was conducted under the strong influence of, and with the direct help of, the missionaries. In addition, as we have seen, the number of government institutions was still small before the 1860s and the standard of education in these schools was not very high. Regarding S. Shugarasubbier, the only Dewan who graduated from the Raja's Free School, the highest institution at the time, Nagam Aiya stated in the *State Manual* that Shungarasubbier was 'of poor educational attainments' as the Free School 'did not then afford any higher'.¹⁰ As a result the state had to rely on the mission schools to a large extent. In fact the missionary institutions produced a number of government officials including two Dewans, as will be seen next.

Educational Institutions of the LMS

The education system of the LMS was principally composed of three main parts—the Seminary at Nagercoil as the highest institution, the boarding schools and Anglo-vernacular schools as secondary schools, and the village schools as primary schools. Table 1 shows the number of pupils in each of the LMS institutions in 1866.

The Nagercoil Seminary was established in 1818. It was the first institution to give regular English education in Travancore. Also, until the Maharaja's College was established, it was 'the head of educational institutions in South and Central Travancore'.¹¹ English, Tamil, Malayalam and Sanskrit were taught in this institution. The prime object of the Seminary was 'training Native Agents for the

⁹Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 452.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 638.

¹¹*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 446.

Table 1: Educational Institutions of the LMS

| Institutions | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Nagercoil Seminary | 147 | – | 147 |
| Boarding Schools | 64 | 200 | 264 |
| Anglo-Vernacular Day Schools | 352 | – | 352 |
| Village Schools | 5425 | 1290 | 6715 |
| Night Schools | 358 | 17 | 375 |
| Total | 6346 | 1507 | 7853 |

Source: TDC Annual Report for 1866.

Mission'.¹² In Travancore, as elsewhere, European missionaries were aided by numerous native agents. In 1868, eight European missionaries worked in Travancore, while there were eleven ordained Native Ministers, 244 Evangelists and Catechists, and 217 Schoolmasters.¹³ Many of the catechists were graduates of the Nagercoil Seminary.

However, this institution also accepted Hindu students. In 1860 there were 63 boarders and 50 day students in the Seminary, and, among the 50 day students, 19 were 'heathens' or Hindus.¹⁴ The English education given at the Seminary was certainly the main attraction for Hindu students who intended to become government officers. J.D. Whitehouse, an LMS missionary, wrote that 'Many of the heathen students ... had obtained government employment in the Medical, Engineering and other Departments'.¹⁵ Among them, the most successful Hindu graduates were undoubtedly Nanoo Pillay and Rama Row, both of whom became Dewans of Travancore. Although they were high-caste Hindus and also Dewans of an orthodox Hindu state, they were 'loyal to the Seminary'. Nanoo Pillay (Dewan, 1877–80) gave to the Seminary a sum of Rs.1000 and

¹²Duthie to Mullens, 1 Sep. 1868, TL, Box 7, CWMA.

¹³*Ibid.*; *LMS Annual Report for 1868*, pp. 73–8.

¹⁴*TDC Annual Report*, 1860, p. 9.

¹⁵Quoted in J.A. Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore, 1806–1959* (Nagercoil: Diocesan Press, 1990), p. 94.

Rama Row (Dewan, 1887–92) donated Rs.500. The interest accrued from these donations was used to award prizes to students every year.¹⁶ The Nagercoil Seminary was raised to a college in 1893 and became the Scott Christian College. It was named after the Director of the LMS who gave a generous gift to the college.¹⁷

'Next in importance to the Seminary' were the boarding schools for both sexes at each head station of the Mission.¹⁸ In 1868, the LMS had five boarding schools for boys and six for girls. The number of boys was 68, and girls 164. These pupils were selected from various congregations 'with a view to their future usefulness in the Mission as Catechists or the wives of Catechists and school teachers', and were trained as mission agents. They learned arithmetic, geography, Malayalam grammar, Malayalam poetry, Tamil, theology and the Bible. The girls were also taught sewing and embroidery.¹⁹

A large number of village schools existed to impart primary education. The LMS had 141 village schools for boys and 31 for girls in 1861. In these schools, Hindus and children from other communities as well as the LMS Christians were educated. In 1868, for example, of the total number of pupils, Protestants constituted 41.1 per cent, while 5.9 per cent were Roman Catholics and the remaining 53.0 per cent were Hindus and from other communities.²⁰ Usually these schools opened and closed with a prayer, and one hour during the regular school hours was devoted to Scripture education.²¹

There is no doubt that the missionaries regarded their educational activities as an important means of proselytization. With regarding to Bible education, G. O. Newport, an LMS missionary, wrote:

The Heathen children at first stoutly refused to learn any Scripture Lessons like other children. They are however obliged to do so outwardly at least by the rules of the school... Very soon, they became much interested in the

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁷*Occasional Speeches Delivered by Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair, Dewan of Travancore, 1916–1920* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1920), p. 10.

¹⁸Duthie to Mullen, 1 Sep. 1868, TL, Box 7, CWMA.

¹⁹*Ibid.*; *TDC Annual Report*, 1867, p. 12; Trivandrum 1866, TR, Box 1, CWMA.

²⁰*TDC Annual Report*, 1868.

²¹Quilon 1899, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

lessons and now learn them with as much zest as the Christians themselves, and in some cases have even greater knowledge of the Christian religion than those who profess it.²²

However, the proselytizing activities of the missionaries came to be increasingly criticized by the higher castes and the Travancore government issued an order to prohibit religious education during school hours. But this was as late as in 1902 and before then the state did not pay much attention to the religious education imparted in mission schools.

Besides these institutions, there were a number of Anglo-vernacular schools, established to train teachers and preachers. But a number of students also became 'clerks and conductors on coffee and tea estates'.²³ Moreover, many of the students were Hindus. One of the Anglo-vernacular schools had 250 pupils and most of them were Hindus.²⁴

In addition to these schools, the LMS had the 'Pulayars' Charity School' established in Trivandrum in 1861. It was maintained partly by a grant of rice from the Travancore government and partly by the interest accrued from the Endowment Fund invested largely by Dr Waring, the former Durbar [Government] Physician. Students from this school were trained to be mission agents, gardeners or domestic servants. Some of them were employed as government vaccinators in charge of their caste, and the intelligent pupils were sent to the Nagercoil Seminary for education in English with a view to their future employment as teachers in the mission.²⁵

Educational Institutions of the CMS

The education system of the CMS was similar to that of the LMS. It had institutions for higher, secondary and primary education. In these institutions, as in the LMS schools, there were also a number of Hindu pupils.

The first college connected with the CMS was established in 1814 under the stimulus and direction of Col. John Munro, the British

²²TDC *Annual Report*, 1866, Pareychaley District, p. 15.

²³Neyoor, 1900, TR, Box 7, CWMA; Nagercoil, 1901, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

²⁴Pareychaley, 1906, TR, Box 8, CWMA.

²⁵TDC *Annual Report*, 1899, p. 5; *Ibid.*, 1873, pp. 22–3; Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society*, p. 178.

Resident.²⁶ It was called the Kottayam College. Although 'the better instruction of the Syrian priests' was the primary object of the college, it also produced a number of officials for the Travancore government, as did the Nagercoil Seminary of the LMS.²⁷ The government itself welcomed the college as a place for general education and granted it a generous amount in donations. In 1815, for example, Rani Lakshmi Bayi donated Rs 20,000.²⁸ But due to the split between the CMS and the Syrian Church in 1837, the 'Old Seminary' came under the Syrian Church. The CMS missionaries established a new college called the CMS College in Kottayam. In this college, the missionaries intended to impart education to 'all classes and creeds alike'.²⁹ This was largely because they felt that 'Higher education is one of the best means of making Christianity reach the High Castes'.³⁰

For secondary education the CMS created the Grammar School at Kottayam. In this school, English, Malayalam and Sanskrit were taught to the pupils, most of whom were Syrians and Nayers. In 1838, it was renamed the CMS College High School. In addition to this school, the CMS established seminaries at Alleppey, Cochin and Trichur to impart secondary education. High schools were also built in Mavelikara, Mallapally, Trichur and other places.³¹ The CMS schools for primary education were called the Parochial Schools or Parish Schools. Although they were originally created for Syrian children, the missionaries also tried to attract non-Christians to these schools. They also opened 'Nayar Schools' in two places at the request of the community.³²

²⁶W.S. Hunt, *The Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin, 1816-1916* (Kottayam, CMS Press, 1918), vol. II, p. 75.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 85; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, 447.

²⁹Agur, *Church History*, pp. 994-6. After the split, some Syrians abandoned the Syrian ritual and became members of the Church of England. Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 215-6.

³⁰To the Sec. of the CMS, 17 Dec. 1898, Original Papers, 1899, CMSA.

³¹Hunt, *The Anglican Church*, vol. II, pp. 73-4; Eapen, *Church Missionary Society and Education in Kerala*, pp. 90-121.

³²Hunt, *The Anglican Church*, p. 70; Eapen, *Church Missionary Society and Education in Kerala*, p. 65. The CMS missionaries were certainly more permissive regarding caste distinctions among the Christians in Travancore, and they did not take any serious measures against these distinctions until the 1900s, as will be seen in Chapter 5. This was certainly because the missionaries intended to approach the higher castes who were not prepared to mingle with the lower castes. The establishment of 'Nayar Schools' was their natural strategy.

Madava Row's Efforts

Until the 1850s missionary institutions were dominant in the area of education. The Travancore government established several English schools, but the number was still small, and some even had to be closed. In addition, no efforts were made to establish vernacular schools. The government institutions were thus remarkably poor. As a result the government depended on the missionaries for the education of its officials and others. But the first substantial step to change this situation was taken by Sir T. Madava Row (Dewan, 1858-72) who paid much attention to education as well as to many other spheres of the government. During and after his Dewanship, government expenditure on education increased considerably. Travancore State spent 1.4 per cent of the gross expenditure on education in 1864-65, while the figure rose to 2.1 per cent in 1869-70 and 3.5 per cent in 1877-78.³³ As a result the number of government schools rose rapidly. In 1859 there was 'only His Highness's Free School at Trevandrum with a Branch School at Quilon'. But in 1867-68 the Travancore government had seven schools in Trivandrum as well as fifteen English and twenty vernacular schools in the districts.³⁴

Meanwhile, Madava Row paid great attention to vernacular education. In 1866, the Central School was established in Trivandrum, and a number of taluq schools were opened in each taluq of Travancore. A vernacular normal school was also opened in Trivandrum in 1866 to train teachers for the vernacular schools. The pattern of education in these vernacular schools was modelled on the English schools, and the textbooks used in these schools were translations from the English books. A Book Committee was created at the time to translate these books.³⁵ In addition to the District Schools, the Travancore government began to establish village schools in 1870. In 1871-72, the government had 141 village schools with 4959 pupils and in 1881-82, 196 schools with 10,374 pupils.³⁶ The number of English district schools also increased during Madava Row's Dewanship. From 1864 to 1868, the number

³³ TAR, 1864-65, 1869-70, 1877-78.

³⁴ H. Drury to Dewan, 30 Sep. 1859, No. 1949, MPP, OIOC; TAR, 1867-68, p. 42.

³⁵ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 455. There were about thirty taluqs in Travancore.

³⁶ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 456; TAR, 1871-72, 1881-82.

of English schools increased from 7 to 15, and the number of students increased from 373 to 1231.³⁷

These efforts with regard to education were made largely for the purpose of reforming the government administration. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Dewan Madava Row and Maharaja Ayilliam Tirunal made great efforts to introduce reforms in almost every department of the government and transform Travancore into a 'modern state' for which the government needed officials who had received western-style education. Madava Row publicized his view regarding his educational policy in 1866:

So far as the Sircar [state] was concerned, all important posts under it would be filled by educated men, and by educated men alone, as soon as they become available. Mere experience in an office had its value, but could not alone suffice for performing well the duties of Government in its several parts. An educated man of limited experience was more valuable than a man of lengthened experience but defective education.³⁸

Meanwhile, the Madras government also urged Travancore State to establish more educational institutions. In September 1859, H. Drury, the Assistant Resident, wrote to Madava Row that 'The first important object would be ... to establish district or talook schools at all the larger towns in North and South Travancore'.³⁹ The Madras government naturally appreciated the efforts of the Travancore government, stating that 'it is gratifying to learn that His Highness the Maharaja has it in contemplation to provide liberally for the development of Vernacular education in Travancore'.⁴⁰

It is true, as Robin Jeffery has pointed out, that the development of government schools 'broke the missionary monopoly and any chance of high castes being forced to attend mission schools in large numbers'.⁴¹ Indeed, R.H. Maddox, a CMS missionary, reported in 1872 that there were 'hardly 20 boys to be found' in his English school, though he had 100 or 150 boys in the previous year. According to him the reason for this sharp decrease was that:

³⁷TAR, 1867-68, p. 45.

³⁸TGG, vol. 4, No. 50, 25 Dec. 1866.

³⁹Drury to Dewan, 30 Sep. 1859, No. 1949, MPP, OIOC.

⁴⁰G.O. No. 63, 26 Feb. 1872, MPP, OIOC.

⁴¹Robin Jeffery, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), p. 82.

the Sircar [state] has opened a great number of Vernacular Schools in different parts of the country, which are maintained in a state of thorough efficiency, and boys find that they can become qualified for the lower grades of Sircar appointments ... very much more quickly and at much less trouble through this vernacular training than through English.⁴²

However, despite competition between the Travancore government and them issionaries in the area of education, the relationship between them seems to have worked very well and to have been mutually beneficial. The missionaries were largely appreciative of Madava Row's reforms. J. Duthie, an LMS missionary who came to Travancore in 1859, wrote about Madava Row that 'He was a man of statesmanlike instincts, deeply impressed with the necessity of reforms ... He understood the work of the missionaries, and valued their relationship'.⁴³ Samuel Mateer, another LMS missionary, expressed his appreciation for the development of education during Madava Row's Dewanship. This was at least partly because he thought that the development of western education (since it enlightened the masses) was favourable for the development of the mission as well. He stated in 1871 that:

Education is thus spreading in a remarkable degree in this interesting country, and must inevitably bring with it, by the blessing of God, the downfall of superstition, error, and oppression, and be the means of introducing an era of national enlightenment, progress and freedom.⁴⁴

Mateer enjoyed a good relationship with the Travancore government. He was appointed Secretary and Treasurer of the Trivandrum People's Library at least twice; he selected new books to be purchased for the library with other members of the managing committee, most of whom were high-caste Hindus. In addition, Mateer organized several lectures. In 1865–66, seven lectures were given by the First Prince of Travancore, T. Madava Row and others as well as three missionaries.⁴⁵ Apparently the Travancore government still needed the missionaries' help to fulfil its aim of 'modernization', and it was also impossible for the government alone to respond to the growing public demand. The Administration Report stated in 1866–67 that 'there is an immense and

⁴²*Madras Church Missionary Record*, No. 11, vol. 34, Dec. 1872, p. 347.

⁴³*LMS Chronicle*, 1906, p. 76.

⁴⁴Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 157.

⁴⁵*TGG*, vol. 6, No. 6, 18 Feb. 1868; *TGG*, vol. 17, No. 44, 4 Nov. 1879.

yet increasing demand for education'.⁴⁶ Under these circumstances, the missionaries and the government largely co-operated rather than competed with each other.

The establishment of the Girl's School by A. M. Blandford of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society is one example of their co-operation. This school was almost exclusively for the education of high-caste girls. In 1879 it had 101 girls, of which the 'greater number' were Nayers; the others were mainly Tamil and Maratha Brahmins.⁴⁷ It was opened in 1864 at an old disused palace within the Fort which contained the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple and was considered to be the most sacred enclosure in Trivandrum. This school steadily developed and became one of the most influential centres of female education in the state. The first woman who passed the matriculation examination from the Madras University had studied in this school. Not surprisingly, as a mission school, it imparted religious education as well. Bible classes were held daily and prayers were offered 'at the close of morning and afternoon school'.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Travancore State showed considerable interest in this school. This was at least partly because the school provided English education for girls, which was not easily obtained at the time. In the school, pupils were instructed in English by a lady missionary and her assistants, though some lessons were taught in Malayalam by a Brahmin. In 1879 the Travancore government established two other schools for girls but English was not taught in these schools.⁴⁹ In any case, in addition to providing the school site in the Fort and a grant-in-aid, the Ranis of Travancore often presented books and prizes to the girls, and the Maharaja himself usually presided at the annual distribution of prizes. In particular, Sir T. Madava Row took a great interest in this mission school. He not only sent his own daughter and niece to the school but also advised other Hindus to make use of this institution.⁵⁰

⁴⁶TAR, 1866-67, p. 84.

⁴⁷*The Missionary Conference: South India and Ceylon, 1879* (Madras: Addison, 1880), vol. 1, p. 173.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 476; *Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Record*, Nov. 1906, vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 97-8.

Apart from educational institutions, the establishment of the government printing press is another example of the favourable relationship between the Travancore government and the missionaries. The first press in Travancore was the Nagercoil Mission Press of the LMS established in 1820 by Charles Mead, an LMS missionary. The CMS also created a press at Kottayam in 1822.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the Government Press was started in the 1830s, shortly after the brother of the Maharaja visited the Nagercoil Press in 1834. It was organized by a man called Samathanam Maistry, one of the workmen trained in the Nagercoil Mission Press. In 1863, Charles Mead became Superintendent of the Press though he had already retired from the LMS due to his re-marriage to an Indian woman. Through his efforts 'the stock of printing machine and types received considerable additions'. The Government Printing Press was established and developed with the help of the missionaries.⁵² In addition, the state supported the publishing activities of the missionaries. The Maharaja rendered 'considerable pecuniary assistance' to the publication of the Malayalam and English Dictionary of B. Bailey, a CMS missionary. Joseph Peet's book on Malayalam grammar was also published under the auspice of the Maharaja.⁵³

Curriculum and State Policy

As we have seen, educational opportunities for ordinary people were limited to the indigenous schools before the nineteenth century, and the state did not pay any attention to these schools. This was undoubtedly because education, except for some Brahmins, had nothing to do with the building and maintaining of the state before 1800. According to Nagam Aiya, the curriculum of the indigenous schools was astronomy, lessons in casting horoscopes and compiling a calendar, 'the chief percepts for daily conduct', known as *Neethi sastra*, the thousand names of Vishnu, a section of the Sanskrit dictionary, a few verses on medicine, general poetry and the three R's.⁵⁴ Regarding the

⁵¹Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 493; Jacob, *A History of the London Missionary Society*, p. 65.

⁵²Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 494; Agur, *Church History*, pp. 900–3; Nagercoil, 1834, India Odds, Box 16, CWMA.

⁵³P. Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times* (1878, reprinted New Delhi: AES, 1985), pp. 441–2.

⁵⁴Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 453–4.

schools for imparting indigenous education, Dewan T. Madava Row wrote that 'the education in them is based on a system which does not attempt the development of the mental powers beyond burdening the memory, and falls far short of the requirement of the present age'.⁵⁵

The Administration Report for 1889-90 also expressed a similar view: 'The instruction thus imparted is entirely superficial and defective and ill-adapted towards improving the mind.'⁵⁶ Thus the development of 'mental powers' or 'improving the mind' was certainly one of the greatest concerns of the state. As we have seen, the state needed these qualities in order to introduce many reforms and to change itself into a 'modern state'. But what was the kind of education considered appropriate for this purpose? The curriculum adopted at government schools might provide a clue. In the Central [Vernacular] School, the following subjects were taught in 1867-68:

The whole of a work on moral and social duties.

Treatise on health and how to preserve it.

Treatise on giving truthful evidence.

Arithmetic ...

Geometry ...

Geography of Europe, Asia and America—Duncan's Geography of India.

Lessons in Sanskrit⁵⁷

Although 'history' does not appear in the above list, it was certainly an important subject in the sense that it was adopted for the entrance examination of the Travancore Vernacular School. The subjects for the examination were:

Written Examination

Language—Malayalam 3rd Book of Reading.

Arithmetic ...

History—Travancore

Geography—Travancore and India

Composition and Dictation ...

Hand-writing—Ability to write well on paper and cadjan [palm leaf]

Viva Voce Examination

Reading ...

Recitation—any passage from an easy Malayalam poetical work

⁵⁵TAR, 1865-66, p. 57.

⁵⁶TAR, 1889-90, p. 150.

⁵⁷TAR, 1867-68, p. 47.

Recitation—any passage from an easy Malayalam poetical work

Sanskrit ...

Mental Arithmetic⁵⁸

As to the curriculum in the aided schools, the Travancore government suggested in 1875 that the following subjects be taught:

Reading—Vignanamunjee, Principles of Morality, Truthful Evidence, Rules of Health and Lessons on Money Matters.

Writing—On paper and cadjan

History—History of Travancore

Arithmetic ...

Geography—Geography of Travancore and General Geography⁵⁹

Thus apart from the three R's, the government tried to promote education on morality, rational thinking and health. The history and geography of Travancore and other places were also important subjects which it wanted to add to the curriculum. Though the government did not demand the teaching of Sanskrit in the aided schools, this language was taught in the government schools.

It is needless to say that a more detailed examination of the textbooks actually used would be necessary to answer the question in full. But the above curricula seem to suggest at least the following things: First of all, a geographical knowledge of Travancore, India and the world was considered essential, and this was undoubtedly seen to be necessary for the development of industry and commerce and for an 'enlightened' and reformed administration. Secondly, education on morality, rationality and health would be very helpful to a state trying to introduce numerous social and administrative reforms. A knowledge of the history of Travancore was undoubtedly useful for the purpose of strengthening the legitimacy of Travancore State since the origin and development of the state would form part of the subject. Similarly, a knowledge of Sanskrit might have been regarded as contributing to maintaining the Hindu tradition, which was considered one of the basic functions of the state. In any case, at least it could be argued that the two main policies of the state had considerable influence upon the curriculum. One was to reinforce the basis of the Hindu state; the other to transform Travancore into

⁵⁸TGG, 1 July 1884, p. 637.

⁵⁹TGG, 14 Sep. 1875, vol. 13, No. 37, p. 844.

a 'modern state'. If the state began to show more and more interest in education, it was at least partly because of these considerations.

Female Education

Sir T. Madava Row also paid considerable attention to female education, partly because he considered the role of women important to achieve his goal of 'modernization'. He stated in the Administration Report for 1862-63 that 'very little, if anything, has been done, for female education. This subjects calls for prompt attention, as such education must be, among other advantages, the foundation of important social reforms'.⁶⁰ Accordingly, the Travancore government established a few schools for girls in the 1860s. The first school was built at the cantonment in Trivandrum, and was supervised by European women.⁶¹ However, compared to the boys, the state clearly paid far less attention to the education of girls. Many of the teachers in the girls' schools were male, and this prevented girls from continuing in school beyond a certain age.⁶² The state tried to improve this situation by supplying qualified female teachers to the increasing number of girls' schools. In 1887, it established a training school for women but this school trained teachers only for the vernacular schools. The 'English Training Branch' was not added until 1904.⁶³

Compared with government institutions, the mission schools for girls appear to have been better organized. Work among the women was one of the most important aspects of missionary activity, largely because they valued the influence of women, who were usually mothers and wives in their homes. An LMS missionary wrote: 'In India, as elsewhere, the *mother's* influence in the home is all-important'.⁶⁴ Apart from educational activities, the missionaries trained Christian women and sent them to the homes of Hindus as 'Bible Women'. They also set up lace and embroidery industries at Nagercoil, Neyyur and other places which certainly attracted many women in Travancore. In 1921 the LMS at Nagercoil alone employed about 2000 women for its lace industry. These women

⁶⁰Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 474.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 475-6.

⁶²TAR, 1886-87, p. 131.

⁶³Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 462.

⁶⁴Trivandrum 1898, TR, Box 7, CWMA, emphasis in original.

made lace in their homes and brought it once a week to the Lace Office in Nagercoil. Most of the lace was sold to Europeans in India but some was exported to South Africa, Australia and the Malay States. All the women were Christians connected with the LMS.⁶⁵

The missionaries were thus pioneers in the area of female education. The first girls' school in Travancore was a boarding school for girls established in Nagercoil in 1819 by Mrs Mead, the wife of an LMS missionary.⁶⁶ In 1867 the LMS had 6 boarding schools and 31 village schools for girls.⁶⁷ Missionary institutions for female education were numerous and influential. Nagam Aiya wrote in 1906: 'From the several centres of missionary activity female education spread all around and there are, at present, a large number of Mission girls' schools distributed throughout the entire extent of the State.'⁶⁸ The state still had to depend on the mission schools for the education of high-caste as well as low-caste girls.

The Fort School established by A.M. Blandford of the Zenana Mission was one of the mission schools which accommodated a number of high-caste girls, as we have seen. The LMS and the CMS also established special schools for high-caste girls. In Nagercoil alone, they had as many as seven schools for non-Christian girls belonging to the high castes. Bible education was given in these schools, and examinations in Scripture were held three times a year. The LMS had three other 'high caste girls' schools' in Neyyur and a similar school in Kottar. The CMS also had at least four 'schools for Hindu girls' belonging to the Sudra and Brahmin castes.⁶⁹ Thus the state relied heavily on the missionaries for the education of girls of all castes. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the state itself began to pay attention to female education.

Grant-in-Aid of 1875

Dewan T. Madava Row and his successors largely maintained a favourable relationship with the missionaries at least in the 1870s and

⁶⁵ Nagercoil, 1921, TR, Box 10, CWMA.

⁶⁶ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, 474.

⁶⁷ *TDC Annual Report for 1867*.

⁶⁸ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 475.

⁶⁹ W.J. Richards, *Twenty Years' CMS Work in Travancore and Cochin, 1858-78* (Kottayam: CMS Press, 1879), p. 8.

the 1880s. This was mainly because they expected the missionaries to undertake the education of the lower castes, which the state was not ready to deal with. The introduction of the grant-in-aid system in 1875 is one example of their relationship in this period.

The Travancore government started to afford grants-in-aid in 1868–69 so as to encourage ‘the educational efforts of the missionary societies’.⁷⁰ But the grants were given only to a small number of schools in Trivandrum. In 1875, however, the government decided to give substantial grants mainly to the missionaries. After this, the number of aided schools rapidly increased, as is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Aided Schools

| Year | Number of aided schools |
|---------|-------------------------|
| 1870–71 | 18 |
| 1875–76 | 218 |
| 1880–81 | 453 |
| 1885–86 | 545 |
| 1890–91 | 1225 |

Source: Travancore Administration Reports for 1870–71, 1875–76, 1880–81, 1885–86, 1890–91.

The commencement of the large-scale grant-in-aid system in 1875 was largely the result of demand from the missionaries. They, especially the LMS missionaries, suffered financially in the early 1870s, and this was the direct cause of the demand for state aid. As to their educational institutions, Samuel Mateer wrote in 1872: ‘This is the most unsatisfactory department of labour in which we are engaged, arising solely from the lack of funds for the maintenance of efficient educational institutions’.⁷¹

Under these circumstances the missionaries raised two issues with the Travancore government. One was the opening of government schools to the lower castes, and the other was affording grants-

⁷⁰*Report of the Education Expenditure Committee* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1921), p. 64.

⁷¹*TDC Annual Report*, 1872, p. 17.

in-aid to mission schools. With regard to the exclusion of the lower castes and Christians from government schools, the missionaries criticized the government severely in the early 1870s. Mateer wrote that it was 'a crying shame and serious blot upon the administration'.⁷² The LMS missionaries then presented a petition to the Maharaja in 1873, appealing him to open 'all the Government schools to all classes' and to set up a grant-in-aid system.⁷³ As for the CMS missionaries, some of their schools also suffered from financial straits. W. Johnson, a CMS missionary, complained of the lack of the grant-in-aid system in Travancore though it existed in 'Tinnevely and other places'. J. H. Bishop, a CMS missionary, also expressed his hope for the introduction of the grant-in-aid system.⁷⁴

The Madras government strongly demanded the opening of government schools in Travancore to the lower castes in the early 1870s after the assault on William Lee, an LMS missionary, discussed in Chapter 2. The Madras government was apparently determined to attack caste prejudices in Travancore at the time. The Travancore government, however, was not prepared to open government schools to the lower castes. It had expressed its attitude a few years earlier, stating that:

if the state, in present circumstances, throw the schools open indiscriminately to all castes, the practical alternatives offered to the high caste are either that they should forgo the advantage of state education or secure that advantage under serious violence to religious feelings. Both these alternatives are to be deprecated.⁷⁵

Under these circumstances, the Maharaja and the Dewan adopted a policy of introducing a large-scale grant-in-aid system which was probably the best possible option for the Travancore government. In May 1875 the Maharaja sanctioned an annual allotment of Rs 15,000 for a grant-in-aid, and the government invited representatives of the missionary societies in Travancore to a conference 'with a view to consider and adopt rules for the distribution of the grants'.⁷⁶ Thus, in September 1875, 'Rules for Grants-in-aid' were

⁷²TDC *Annual Report*, 1872, pp. 10–11.

⁷³Pareychalay, 1872 and 1873, TR, Box 1, CWMA.

⁷⁴W. Johnson to Fenn, 6 Oct. 1870, Mission Book, M28, CMSA; J.H. Bishop to Chairman, 18 Feb. 1875, Mission Book, M48, CMSA.

⁷⁵TAR, 1866–67, p. 82.

⁷⁶W. Hay to Offg. Ch. Sec., 18 May 1875, MPP, OIOC.

published in the *Government Gazette*. The rules laid down that 'one half of the actual salaries of the teaching staff' was to be given. The government also publicized some of the conditions of the grant. According to the rules, the grant-in-aid was given only to schools with an average attendance of 25 pupils or more. The government also required that schools attain the standard of government village schools, specifying the standard required in reading, writing, history, arithmetic and geography.⁷⁷

These conditions were not difficult for the missionaries to meet. They were able to obtain large sums of money as grants-in-aid and often expressed their gratitude to the Maharaja and the government. In 1880, one LMS missionary wrote in his annual report: 'It is encouraging to feel that His Highness the Maharajah takes such an interest in the education of the lower orders of his people.'⁷⁸ Also in 1880, Rev. Yesudian, a native missionary of the LMS, stated that 'The deep interest which the Government displays in the progress of every Missionary effort for the enlightenment and well being of the country, is another feature peculiar to the times'.⁷⁹ The Madras government also appreciated the commencement of this grant-in-aid system, describing it as a 'liberal and enlightened measure'.⁸⁰ Thus the grant-in-aid seems to have satisfied almost all the parties concerned. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the higher castes and the state began to pay attention to the mission schools and to their activities in diffusing Christianity among the lower castes.

In any case, as a result of this system, the roles of the missionaries and the government came to be defined more clearly. The missionaries took charge of the education of the lower castes and Christians, though they still educated a large number of the higher castes. On the other hand, Travancore State largely concentrated on the education of high-caste Hindus. The state at least took cognizance of the situation, and the missionaries were certainly well satisfied with it.

⁷⁷TGG, vol. 13, No. 37, 14 Sep. 1875.

⁷⁸Neyoor 1880, TR Box 2, CWMA.

⁷⁹TDC Annual Report, 1879, p. 5.

⁸⁰G.O. No. 335, 3 June 1875, MPP, OIOC.

Grant-in-aid to Indigenous Schools

From 1875, when the Travancore government introduced a substantial grant-in-aid system, it largely adopted a policy of increasing the number of aided schools rather than establishing new government schools. As a result, the number of aided schools increased rapidly, while government schools remained almost the same, as Table 3 shows.

Table 3: Number of Government Schools and Aided Schools, 1875-1894

| Year | Government schools aided schools | |
|---------|----------------------------------|------|
| 1875-76 | 227 | 218 |
| 1880-81 | 230 | 435 |
| 1885-86 | 226 | 645 |
| 1890-91 | 239 | 1225 |
| 1893-94 | 280 | 1410 |

Source: Travancore Administration Reports for 1875-76, 1880-81, 1885-86 and 1893-94.

There were numerous indigenous schools even in the late nineteenth century. In 1889-90, 31.7 per cent of pupils received their education in private schools run by Indians, almost all of which were certainly indigenous or 'pial' schools.⁸¹ Faced with so many surviving schools of this kind, the state tried to make use of them rather than abolish them. Dewan V. Ramiengar stated in October 1883 that 'There are hundreds of indigenous schools already existing which, under the grant-in-aid system, might perhaps be moulded to our purposes and gradually turned to useful account'.⁸²

Accordingly, in November 1883, Ramiengar publicized the policy, stating that 'all future expenditure should be directed rather to encouraging local efforts by aiding schools established by private agency than to opening of new Government schools'.⁸³ Along with the policy, the Travancore government established two normal schools in Trivandrum and Kottar near Nagercoil with a view to

⁸¹TAR, 1889-90, p. 151.

⁸²TAR, 1883-84, p. LXXVI.

⁸³TGG Supplement, 13 Nov. 1883, p. 1.

providing trained teachers for aided schools. The lessons were in the vernaculars of Travancore, 'Malayalam in the north and Tamil in the south'.⁸⁴ The government also announced in 1884 that preference would be given to indigenous schoolmasters and their relatives in the selection of candidates for admission to the Travancore Vernacular Schools.⁸⁵ In addition, a Book Committee which had been abolished a few years earlier, was revived to provide 'appropriate' books to indigenous schools.⁸⁶ As a result, in 1889-90, printed books instead of manuscripts were in common use in the majority of indigenous schools.⁸⁷

The policy of affording grants-in-aid to indigenous schools continued in the 1880s, and the number of aided indigenous schools increased sharply. The number of 'private aided schools' increased from 44 in 1882-83 to 644 in 1891-92, while mission aided schools increased from 395 in 1882 to only 605 in 1891-92.⁸⁸ The Nayers took advantage of this policy; 41.8 per cent of the pupils who learned in native aided schools were Nayers and other Sudras in 1891-92.⁸⁹ There can be no doubt that a large number of Nayers were then able to give their children 'better' education in 'private aided schools' without sending them to mission schools. In this sense the measure certainly worked to reduce the influence of the missionaries.

Education Reforms of 1894

The favourable relationship between the missionaries and Travancore State which had continued since T. Madava Row's reforms changed considerably in the 1890s. The state came to adopt a number of policies which were considered hostile to the missionaries. The policy concerning education reforms in 1894 was certainly one of them.

Like other education reforms in Travancore, the main purpose of the reforms of 1894 was to strengthen government control over education. For this purpose, the Travancore government reformed

⁸⁴TAR, 1883-84, p. LXXVIII

⁸⁵TAR, 1884-85, p. 114.

⁸⁶TGG Supplement, 13 Nov. 1883, p. 3.

⁸⁷TAR, 1889-90, p. 150

⁸⁸TAR, 1882-83, 1891-92.

⁸⁹TAR, 1891-92, Appendix.

the administration system, improved the system of inspection, and extensively revised the grant-in-aid system. The most important reform concerning the administration was the unification of the two divisions regarding English and vernacular education. The government devised a comprehensive system so as to 'secure unity of aim and method throughout the whole organization'.⁹⁰ The Travancore government also reinforced the inspection system. Schools were placed under three Range Inspectors, each with four assistants and a few sub-assistants to help them, and the duties, responsibilities and powers of the Inspectors were defined. At the same time, a post of Educational Secretary was created. Dr A.C. Mitchell, the Principal of the Maharaja's College, was appointed to the post and he had 'a large hand' in framing the reforms of 1894.⁹¹ The introduction of the Travancore Educational Rules was perhaps the most important reform of 1894. Through these strict rules, the Travancore government attempted to control the curricula, qualifications of teachers, state of buildings, accommodation and sanitation of aided schools.⁹²

The government made great efforts to increase the number of government schools. Nagam Aiya wrote in 1906 that 'there is no village of any consequence in the whole State whose educational requirements have not been or are not being supplied directly by Government'.⁹³ In addition, the Travancore government also started to build schools for the 'backward classes' just after the publication of the Education Rules. In the area of female education also the government made new and unprecedented efforts. In some places it established schools for girls near the mission schools and many girls changed their schools as the parents preferred that 'their children should attend a school where there is no Bible teaching'.⁹⁴

As a result of the strict rules which were enforced from 11 December 1896, the number of aided schools declined abruptly. Although there were 1265 aided schools in 1895-96, only 472 remained after one year. In other words, almost two-thirds of the

⁹⁰Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 457-8.

⁹¹P. Rajagopalachari, *Note on the Administration of Travancore* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1914), pp. 53-4.

⁹²Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 458.

⁹³*Ibid.*, pp. 278, 482.

⁹⁴Medical Mission, 1897, TR, Box 6, CWMA.

former aided schools were deprived of grants-in-aid after the enforcement of the new rules.⁹⁵ The educational institutions of the missions were greatly affected by changes in the rules. T. W. Bach, an LMS missionary in charge of the Trivandrum Mission District, wrote in 1898 that 'several of our older schools had to be closed, and others [continued] entirely at Mission expense'.⁹⁶ A CMS missionary also wrote in 1897 that they were facing financial difficulties owing to the operation of the new grant-in-aid code.⁹⁷ The missionaries considered the educational reforms of 1894 as reflecting a substantial change in the attitude of the government towards them. I.H. Hacker, an LMS missionary, wrote in 1900 that 'during the last decade the whole policy of Government has been changed'. He also stated that 'the leading officials in this new Education Department ... made this change of policy a means of hindering Christian work'.⁹⁸ H. T. Wills, also an LMS missionary, wrote in 1896 that 'Dr Mitchell, the head of the College and Educational Sec. to the Dewan, is determined apparently to oust the missionaries if he can from all educational work'.⁹⁹ In fact, there is no doubt that this grant-in-aid system became a useful device for the government to control the missionaries' proselytizing activities. W. J. Richards, a CMS missionary, wrote in 1899 that 'Wherever a school is aggressive on Hinduism, it is very difficult to get grant-in-aid'.¹⁰⁰ Thus the grant-in-aid system certainly influenced missionary activities.

The Travancore government attempted to restrict religious education in aided schools by formulating the Education Rules of 1894. But not surprisingly, the missionaries, both the LMS and the CMS, strongly opposed the clause that affected them, and the government finally withdrew it from the rules.¹⁰¹ The reason for this withdrawal is not clear, but, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the state had to deal with strong protests from the missionaries regarding the inheritance rights of converts to Christianity. This was

⁹⁵TAR, 1896-97, p. 164; TAR, 1895-96.

⁹⁶Trivandrum, 1898, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁹⁷Caley to Sell, 26 Jun. 1897, Original Papers, CMSA.

⁹⁸Neyoor, 1900, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁹⁹Wills to Thompson, 14 Feb 1896, TL Box 17, CWMA.

¹⁰⁰Letter from W.J. Richards, 7 Dec. 1899, in *Extracts from the Annual Letters of the Missionaries for 1899* (London: Church Mission House, 1899), Part 17, p. 608.

¹⁰¹Duthie to Thompson, 4 Oct. 1904, TL, Box 21, CWMA.

a very serious problem for the state and was also discussed by the British government. Therefore, Travancore State at least at that moment needed to avoid giving the impression that the state was anti-Christian or anti-missionary. In other words, the problem of inheritance rights was undoubtedly considered much more serious and urgent than that of religious education in mission schools. In fact, shortly after both the Madras government and the Government of India finally decided not to interfere in the matter of inheritance in 1901,¹⁰² Travancore State began to adopt several anti-missionary policies including restriction on religious education.

Thus, in 1902, rules were published prohibiting the use of other than approved readers and textbooks in all aided schools.¹⁰³ On 11 June 1904, an order was issued by which the government prohibited religious education during school hours, a requirement which the government had previously withdrawn from the Education Rules of 1894. The LMS and CMS missionaries again appealed to the Dewan against this order. The missionaries stated that in British India 'freedom remained unabridged' with respect to religious education.¹⁰⁴ But this order finally took effect and it greatly restricted missionary activities.¹⁰⁵

However, the education reforms of 1894 were far from complete and had to be modified several times until a new Education Code was issued in 1909-10 and the strict rules were relaxed from time to time. As early as in 1896-97, for example, the rules relating to building and accommodation were relaxed, and also special allowances were made for schools for the 'backward classes or in backward districts'. Thus 'liberal aid was given to the schools for the depressed classes opened by private managers, mostly Missionaries'.¹⁰⁶

Consequently the policy concerning the Rules of 1894 was gradually lost sight of and in fact 'not a single rule' issued in 1894 was still in operation in 1910.¹⁰⁷ This relaxation of the rules was certainly welcomed by the missionaries who were able to retrieve

¹⁰²From Secretary of State, 30 Mar. 1901, Foreign Dept. Notes, Intl., 25 May 1901, NAI.

¹⁰³TAR, 1901-02, p. 47; *Travancore Almanac*, 1904, pp. 187-8.

¹⁰⁴Duthie to Thompson, 4 Oct. 1904, TL, Box 21, CWMA.

¹⁰⁵LMS *Annual Report* 1911, p. 110.

¹⁰⁶Rajagopalachari, *Note*, pp. 53-4; TAR, 1896-97, p. 177.

¹⁰⁷Rajagopalachari, *Note*, pp. 53-4.

many of the grants-in-aid which they had lost under the revised rules, though it is also certain that they themselves made efforts to improve the standard of their schools. T.W. Bach, an LMS missionary in charge of the Trivandrum Mission District, wrote that 'we fully expect to recover our position in 1898'. Another LMS missionary also stated that '64 out of 69 village schools received grant-in-aid in 1902'.¹⁰⁸ Thus the Education Reforms of 1894 were far from successful in Travancore State partly because the state still largely needed the help of the missionaries to cope with the growing demand for education particularly from the lower castes.

Education of the Lower Castes, 1894-1909

The lower castes, such as the Izhavas, Pulayas and Parayas were excluded from government schools in almost all cases. In 1891-92, the Izhavas were only 2.1 per cent of all the pupils in government schools,¹⁰⁹ while they constituted 16 per cent of the total population. There were almost no pupils from among the Pulayas and Parayas in government schools.

However, this exclusion increasingly became a political matter as the Izhavas and other castes began to assert themselves especially from the 1890s onwards. In 1896, P. Palpu, one of the Izhava leaders, submitted a petition to the Maharaja in which he referred to the exclusion of the Izhavas from government schools. In 1903 the SNDP Yogam was created by Sri Narayana Guru and other Izhava leaders for the purpose of the religious and social advancement of the Izhavas.¹¹⁰ The Pulayas also began to make efforts for their own upliftment. From the late nineteenth century, Ayyan Kali (1863-1941), who played a leading role in the struggle of the Pulayas, challenged a number of caste-based disadvantages such as exclusion from public roads and markets. Among them, exclusion from government schools was one of the biggest issues.¹¹¹ The Administration Report for 1904-05 stated that 'Every class of people from the highest Brahmin to the lowest Pulaya exhibits real

¹⁰⁸Trivandrum, 1898, TR Box 7, CWMA; Nagercoil 1902, TR, Box 8, CWMA.

¹⁰⁹TAR, 1891-92.

¹¹⁰Jeffery, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 205-6, 210.

¹¹¹K. Saradamoni, *Emergence of a Slave Caste: Pulayas of Kerala* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1980), pp. 146-9.

interest in, and yearning for, the education of the children of their particular community'.¹¹²

Under these circumstances the Travancore government made efforts to provide education to the lower castes. In 1895–96, 15 schools were established for the 'backward classes' by the government: 4 for Muslims, 7 for Izhavas, 2 for Pulayas, 1 for Marakkans and 1 for Kanis. In the next year, 15 more schools were established for them.¹¹³ In 1895, the Travancore government also decided to grant scholarships to the 'poor and backward classes' with a view to providing teachers for their schools.¹¹⁴

The Travancore government also gradually threw its schools open to the lower castes, especially the Izhavas. By the 1900s, most of the government schools, except those situated near temples or palaces, were thrown open to Izhava boys. The Izhavas now made efforts to get their girls admitted into government schools. In 1908, Kumaran Asan, one of the Izhava leaders, urged the government to open its schools to their girls.¹¹⁵ In reply to his demand, Dewan P. Rajagopalachari stated in 1908:

His Highness's Government are not prepared to force matters in that direction. They hope that time would so far have changed that it would be possible for Brahmin, Nair and Ezhava girls to sit together in all rural places, as the boys of those communities are now doing.¹¹⁶

Although the Travancore government compromised with the Izhavas by admitting their boys into schools, it was not prepared to admit the girls. Caste prejudice was more apparent in the case of education for girls than for boys, though the reason for this difference is not clear. Also, the government still almost completely denied admission to the children of the Pulayas and Parayas, who were much lower than the Izhavas in the caste hierarchy in Travancore, at least until about 1909.

Though the government made efforts to impart education to the lower castes, it still had to rely on the missionaries to cope with the growing demand mainly from the lower castes. As we have seen, it

¹¹²TAR, 1904–05, p. 60.

¹¹³Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 482.

¹¹⁴TGG, 6 Aug. 1895, vol. 33, No. 32.

¹¹⁵SMPAP, 5th meeting, 1908, p. 73.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

was difficult to open government schools to the 'polluted castes', which would result in serious opposition from the higher castes. Also, the government was not in a position to establish enough special schools for the 'backward classes'. In fact, there were 276 schools for the 'backward classes' with 5907 pupils in 1907, and only 20 of these schools were under the direct management of the Travancore government.¹¹⁷

These considerations prompted the Travancore government to relax the strict educational rules issued in 1894 and to give a large amount in grants to the missionaries again. In addition, it declared free education for the children of 'backward classes'. In 1904, ten years after the publication of the Education Rules, the Travancore government held a conference in which 'all denominations and interests were duly represented'. The government announced in this conference that 'the grant to certain vernacular schools was reduced from three-fourth to one half of the teachers' salaries'. But, at the same time, it declared that it undertook to meet the entire cost of the primary education of 'backward classes' and allotted about Rs 17,000 to this account. The government also added that 'caste should remain unaffected by change of religion'. Thus this benefit was also available to Christian converts from the 'depressed classes'. The missionaries who had a large number of schools for the 'backward classes' took advantage of this policy.¹¹⁸

However, especially from the 1900s, a number of high-caste Hindus began to complain openly about the education imparted by the missionaries. In 1905, a Nayar headmaster of a high school in Trivandrum stated in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly regarding the grant-in-aid schools run by the missionaries that 'Pulayas and others could not derive the benefits of instruction in those schools without sacrificing their religion'. He then urged the Travancore government to 'open more schools for the backward classes'.¹¹⁹ Another Nayar representative also stated in the Popular Assembly that 'a large number of schools were under the management of the missionaries and it was noteworthy that they turned their attention more to conversion than to education'.¹²⁰ The Dewan stated in reply

¹¹⁷SMPAP, 3rd Meeting, 1907, p. 111.

¹¹⁸SMPAP, 1905, p. 37; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 483.

¹¹⁹SMPAP, 2nd Meeting, 1905, p. 84.

¹²⁰SMPAP, 3rd Meeting, 1907, p. 111.

to this appeal that 'Education cannot be unsound simply because it is given by missionaries'.¹²¹ But there can be no doubt that Travancore State responded at least partly to the views of the high-caste Hindus when it adopted the policy of throwing open its schools to all classes in 1909–10 through the Education Code.

The Education Code of 1909–10

The Education Code introduced in the year 1909–10 was 'a comprehensive measure which superseded all previous rules regarding education'. It defined more clearly the conditions of grants-in-aid; reclassified the schools into elementary and secondary; introduced a system of the licensing of teachers; modernized the curriculum; and introduced the School Leaving Certificate.¹²²

But one of the most distinctive features of the code was that the Travancore government recognized the importance of throwing open its schools to all classes 'without distinction of caste and creed'.¹²³ Dewan P. Rajagopalachari confirmed the policy in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly in 1912, stating that 'All schools which have been thrown open to Elavas are also now open to Pulayas'.¹²⁴ But despite the declaration by the government, many government schools were still closed to the Pulayas and other classes. In 1902, only seven schools admitted Pulaya children. But in 1916–17, 292 elementary schools for boys admitted Pulaya and Paraya pupils for the first time.¹²⁵ As Table 4 shows, the number of Pulayas and Parayas rapidly increased in the 1910s, the direct result of the new government policy.

Another important feature of the Education Code was similar to the Education Rules of 1894. The government attempted to strengthen its control over education by establishing new government schools and by imposing strict rules on private schools including mission schools. But what was different from the previous reforms was the introduction of the system of recognition. This system was introduced so as to control unaided schools, many of

¹²¹*Ibid.*

¹²²Rajagopalachari, *Note*, pp. 54–5.

¹²³*Ibid.*

¹²⁴SMPAP, 8th Meeting, 1912, p. 82.

¹²⁵TAR, 1916–17, p. 66.

Table 4: Number of Pulaya and Paraya Pupils

| Year | Pulayas | Parayas |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1910-11 | 1589 | 1122 |
| 1912-13 | 1191 | 1290 |
| 1914-15 | 4256 | 1816 |
| 1916-17 | 10913 | 4955 |
| 1918-19 | 13204 | 4971 |
| 1920-21 | 12381 | 5135 |

Source: Travancore Administration Reports 1910-11, 1912-13, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1918-19 and 1920-21

which were indigenous schools. In this system, unaided schools were divided into recognized and unrecognized schools. The unrecognized schools were deprived of the right of sending up candidates for the public examinations, and also stringent rules were imposed, prohibiting the admission of pupils from unrecognized to recognized schools.¹²⁶ However, despite the government's efforts, a large number of unrecognized schools survived and the reason for this was that 'these schools were supplying a real need in the country'.¹²⁷ However these schools were gradually being forced to close down. In 1910-11 there were 1491 unrecognized schools in Travancore but the number was down to 933 in 1920-21 and 376 in 1926-27.¹²⁸

As for aided schools, their numbers decreased sharply immediately after the enforcement of the Code. In 1908-09, there were 1330 aided schools in Travancore, but in 1910-11 there were only 805 such schools. However, although the mission schools were certainly affected by the Code, the missionaries accepted the Code calmly and largely succeeded in improving their schools along the lines required by the Code. They in fact appreciated the Code as a 'healthy incentive'. W.S. Hunt, a CMS missionary, wrote thus about the Code:

¹²⁶*Report of the Education Expenditure Committee*, 1921, p. 11.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

¹²⁸TAR, 1910-11, 1920-21, 1926-27.

Though this involved a great expenditure of money for the provision of teachers, buildings and apparatus to satisfy the conditions of the Education Code and to retain Government grants, it proved a healthy incentive, and provided a more efficient education for the low-caste children.¹²⁹

A.T. Foster, an LMS missionary, also wrote that they largely succeeded in their efforts to cope with the requirements of the government. He then stated that the changes brought by the Code was 'salutary' and that there was 'a marked change for the better'.¹³⁰ Thus the missionaries adopted a positive attitude towards the Code which was partly because they themselves recognized the necessity for reform. In 1906, an LMS missionary wrote that 'The standard of the Schools throughout is low, few being higher than the Second Class and the amount they learn is barely enough for even reading the Gospels'.¹³¹

Thus the relationship between Travancore State and the missionaries did not deteriorate after the enforcement of the Code. In this respect, the situation was very different than in the 1890s. However, it is also true that the government strengthened its control over education by throwing open its schools to the lower castes and by other measures and missionary influence did lessen after the introduction of the Code.

Conclusion

Until the nineteenth century, Travancore State, like many other 'pre-modern' states, did not consider that education was one of the functions of the state. The offices of the government were largely hereditary, and education given in indigenous schools was regarded sufficient for government officials as well as ordinary people. Perhaps the first official statement by the state regarding education was made by Rani Gouri Parvati Bayi in 1817. She declared that 'the State should defray the entire cost of the education of its people'.¹³² But in reality the state did not establish its own schools until the 1830s and moreover the quality of education in these government schools was not very high. The state thus greatly depended on the missionaries in the area of education. Many officials were educated at the mission schools.

¹²⁹Hunt, *The Anglican Church*, vol. II, p. 236.

¹³⁰*LMS Annual Report*, 1912, p. 172.

¹³¹Nagercoil, 1906, TR, Box 8.

¹³²TAR, 1928-29, p. 192.

Dewan Sir T. Madava Row recognized the importance of western education and greatly changed this situation. To enable prospective higher officials in the government service to be educated in government schools, he, for example, upgraded the Raja's High School into a college in 1866. For the purpose of training subordinate officials, a large number of vernacular schools were established. At the time, however, the state was not prepared to educate the lower castes, a task left almost completely to the missionaries. Similarly, female education was also largely left to them. The educational roles of the state and the missionaries were thus roughly defined after the 1860s. The state generally provided education for the male members of higher castes, and the missionaries for the lower castes and women. Both the state and the missionaries were, in the short term, more or less satisfied with this situation. The grant-in-aid of 1875 is one example of their strained but generally favourable relationship at the time.

In the 1890s Travancore State began to recognize the importance of the education of the lower castes, mainly due to demands from two directions. One was from the lower castes themselves who wanted the government schools to be thrown open to them. The other came, as we shall see in Chapter 5 in more detail, from the higher castes who were increasingly concerned about the growing influence of the missionaries and the increasing number of converts from the lower castes. Accordingly, the Travancore government adopted policies such as establishing special schools for the lower castes and throwing open some schools to certain low castes. But these efforts were not very successful, and the state still depended on the missionaries, largely because it had to cope with growing demands in the area of education. Thus the state continued to provide substantial grants to mission schools. As for the missionaries, it was impossible for them to continue their educational activities successfully without grants-in-aid from the state. Moreover, as the Madras government increasingly came to avoid intervening in social and religious matters in Travancore, as we have seen in Chapter 2, it became increasingly difficult for the missionaries to confront the Travancore government and accordingly, they largely complied with the requirements of the government. Their relationship built on compromise and competition largely continued at least until the 1930s.

Chapter 4

Medicine: The 'Charitable State' and the Missionaries

Introduction

Medicine played a major role in missionary work in Travancore, and in the informal partnership between the missionaries and the state. Both shared the view that dispensing western medicine constituted 'charity' work. From their Hindu perspective as well as their 'modernizing stance', the Maharajas and the Travancore government had an idea of a 'charitable state', and made great efforts to introduce western medicine. In this the missionaries were seen to be valuable allies rather than competing adversaries.

However, the missionaries clearly had practical objects of their own in providing medicine to the people. One of the most important purposes of their medical activities was to establish contact with the higher castes and to seek to convert them. The missionaries made full use of the opportunities their medical activities provided. In this sense, medical missions could have been a great threat to Travancore State, which clearly identified itself as a Hindu state. In actuality, however, the missionaries and the state developed a mutually favourable relationship in the area of medicine, a much more favourable one than in the area of education. One of the main purposes of this chapter is to investigate how the state and the missionaries maintained their relationship in the area of medicine.

Compared to the Madras Presidency, Travancore State seems to have paid greater attention to the health of its people from early times. In British India, the primary concern of the medical administration was to secure the health of 'the colonizers, not the colonized' for a variety of reasons at least until the late nineteenth

century.¹ In Travancore, the Maharaja's attention was directed largely to his own people and not to a white minority, and the ruler himself responded positively to western medicine. It was partly for these reasons that Travancore generally had better medical facilities than did other parts of India. In addition, in the area of indigenous medicine, Travancore State showed a much more positive attitude than the British authorities. And this positive attitude towards medicine, whether western or indigenous, seems to be one of the principal factors that contributed to the higher standard of health in Kerala even today. As is well known, Kerala has shown a much lower infant mortality rate and a much longer life expectancy than have other parts of India² and Kerala today has better facilities than any other part of India. In 1981 Kerala had 125 beds per 100,000 persons compared to the all-India average of only 70. Also in that year, Kerala had 46 doctors and 3.5 hospitals per 100,000 persons compared with India's 39 doctors and one hospital.³ While not directly concerned with the reasons for the exceptional performance of Kerala on the health front in recent decades, it is clear from this study that part of the explanation lies in the commitment of Travancore State in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In part, therefore, this chapter seeks to examine the background to government medical policy in Travancore and the reasons for its difference from other parts of India.

Government Institutions

Unlike education, government institutions dominated medical activities in Travancore from the beginning. In the year 1870–71, for example, government institutions treated more than five times the number of patients as did the LMS institutions. In addition, the number of patients treated in government institutions increased far more rapidly than in LMS institutions, as Table 5 indicates.

¹David Arnold, 'Touching the Body: Perspectives on the Indian Plague, 1896–1900', Ranjit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 58.

²Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well-Being: How Kerala became 'a Model'* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 186.

³Richard W. Franke and Barbara H. Chasin, *Kerala: Development through Radical Reform* (New Delhi: Promilla, 1992), p.43

Table 5: Number of Patients Treated in Government and LMS Institutions

| Year* | Government institutions | LMS institutions |
|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1870–71 | 66,757 | 12,046 |
| 1880–81 | 92,419 | n/a |
| 1890–91 | 120,883 | n/a |
| 1900–91 | 438,433 | 66,996 |
| 1910–11 | 543,345 | 113,203 |
| 1920–21 | 940,170 | 118,144 |
| 1930–31 | 1,975,328 | 145,532 |

Source: Travancore Administration Report for 1870–71, 1880–81, 1890–91, 1900–01, 1910–11, 1920–21 and 1930–31; South Travancore Medical Mission Annual Report for 1937 in Travancore Report, CWMA.

*The year shown here is a Malayalam year which begins in August every year. The figures for the LMS institutions are for 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931 respectively.

It is true that there were several institutions run by Christian bodies apart from the LMS institutions. The CMS started a Leper Asylum in 1871; Roman Catholics had a hospital and dispensary at a place called Manjummel; the Church of England Zenana Mission had a dispensary at Trivandrum; and the Salvation Army started medical activities from the late nineteenth century.⁴ But the number of the patients treated in these Christian institutions was very small compared with the government institutions. As is shown on Table 6, the number of patients treated in the aided Christian institutions in 1896–97 was 22,055, while government institutions treated 333,199 patients in the same year.⁵

⁴Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, part II, p. 545.

⁵Although the number of patients treated in the unaided Christian medical institutions, such as dispensaries of the LMS, is not shown in this table, the government institutions were certainly dominant if the number is added. In addition, the CMS, the most influential missionary body in central and north Travancore, did not have substantial medical missions, as will be seen later. Apart from the Christian institutions, planters had several hospitals and dispensaries. TAR, 1896–97, p. 161.

Table 6: Number of Patients Treated in the Aided Christian Institutions in 1896–97.

| Name of institution | Number of patients |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| LMS Hospital, Neyyur | 8,659 |
| Roman Catholic Archbishop's Hospital | 10,818 |
| CMS Leper Asylum, Alleppy | 24 |
| Zenana Mission Dispensary | 2,554 |
| Total | 22,055 |

Source: Travancore Administration Report for 1896–97, p.161.

There can be no doubt that the missionaries' influence in the area of medicine was much less than in the area of education. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the missionaries had great influence in the area of education. In 1885–86, for example, 18,802 pupils studied in the aided mission schools, compared to 13,501 in government schools.⁶

The European system of medical aid was first introduced in Travancore in 1811. Although it was at first confined to the members of the ruling family and government officials, it was subsequently extended to the prisoners and then the general public. A Darbar [government] Physician was appointed, and the government institutions developed under his supervision.⁷ In 1863–64 there were nine government medical institutions in Travancore, including the Charity Hospital in Trivandrum and the hospitals in Nagercoil, Shencottah, Quilon and Alleppey.⁸

A European medical officer called the Darbar Physician was, as noted, in charge of the Medical Department. Under him, there were many Indian medical officers, such as surgeons, assistant surgeons, apothecaries, assistant apothecaries and hospital assistants.⁹ A substantial majority of these government medical officers were Syrian Christians. In 1908, out of 87 officers of all grades in the Medical Department, '53 were Christians, 23 were Sudras, 8 were Brahmins,

⁶TAR, 1885–86.

⁷TAR, 1930–31, p. 170.

⁸TAR, 1863–64, p. 24.

⁹Travancore Almanac, 1904, pp. 73–87.

2 were Mahomedans and one was Ezhava'.¹⁰ The Travancore government was responsible, at least in part, this situation. A Christian called Mathew John studied in the Madras Medical College for seven years at the expense of the Travancore government. He was posted at a government medical institution in Quilon in 1872 after finishing his training.¹¹

The government institutions continued to develop. The General Hospital was opened in Trivandrum in 1865; a medical school was started in 1869; and the first asylum for insane people was opened in 1878. Also in 1887, at a relatively early stage in the development of the women's medical movements in India, the Victoria Medical School and Hospital for Women was created for the purpose of training midwives and nurses.¹² As a result of these state-directed efforts, medical relief in Travancore progressed more rapidly than in the Madras Presidency. Nagam Aiya stated that Travancore had 56 medical institutions including 12 aided ones in 1904, which means one for every 125 square miles and 52,715 of the population, while there was one medical institution for every 224 square miles and every 60,510 inhabitants in the Madras Presidency.¹³ Also, by 1897, Travancore had 34 beds per 100,000 of the population, while neighbouring Malabar District had only 14 beds.¹⁴

Travancore State also made a considerable effort to vaccinate people against smallpox. It issued a proclamation on 14 August 1878 which ordered every public servant and student in the government and aided schools to be vaccinated. In addition, the state tried to promote vaccination by setting the example of the ruling family before its people. In 1888–89 animal lymph was for the first

¹⁰SMPAP, 6th Session, 5 Jan. 1910, p. 33.

¹¹Dewan to Resident, 25 Oct. 1872, in G.O. No. 408, 15 Nov. 1872, OIOC.

¹²Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 538–9. It was in 1885 that the British colonial authorities began to provide medical instruction for women as doctors, hospital assistants, nurses, and midwives in India: David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 262–3.

¹³Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 536.

¹⁴M. Kabir and T.N. Krishnan, 'Social Intermediation and Health Transition: Lessons from Kerala' Paper for Workshop on Health and Development in India held in New Delhi on 2–4 January 1992, p. 20. Partly for this reason, the death rate in Malabar in the mid-1950s was nearly double that in Travancore-Cochin. Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well-Being*, p. 191.

time manufactured in the state, and in 1890–91 the Vaccine Depot was opened in Trivandrum.¹⁵ The state also paid attention to the vaccination of the lowest castes from an early stage. In 1866–67, about 2000 Pulayas were vaccinated.¹⁶ A female vaccinator was employed by 1891–92 to meet the wishes of those who objected to male vaccinators visiting their homes.¹⁷

Travancore State thus made great efforts to introduce western medicine among its people. This was largely because the state considered that providing 'charity' for its people was an important function of a Hindu state. In 1865 Maharaja Ayilliam Tirunal himself opened the General Hospital and stated through the Dewan that:

For time out of mind, charity has been regarded by Travancore as one of the cardinal duties of the state. Its reputation as Dhurma Raj is familiar to all India. What can be more real, more substantial charity, than the provision of means for the relief or mitigation of sickness and disease ... One of the main objects of my ambition is to see that good medical aid is placed within the reach of all classes of my subjects.¹⁸

The Maharaja himself translated a paper entitled 'Sick-nursing' into Malayalam, which certainly helped to spread the image of a 'Charitable Raja'.¹⁹

This attitude of the Maharaja seems to have been very different from that of the British colonial authorities. In British India, medical priority was given, apart from jails, to the Army, which was one of the principal agencies to maintain the British Empire.²⁰ By contrast, Travancore, which depended on the British for its defence, did not have a substantial military force except the Nayar Brigade with a strength of about 1500. This was a 'semi-peasant force entirely recruited locally'. The men spent four days on duty and four days working in their fields, and their work was 'entirely guard and

¹⁵Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 782; Rajagopalachari, *Note*, p. 51.

¹⁶TAR, 1866–67, p. 97.

¹⁷TAR, 1891–92, p. 231.

¹⁸TAR, 1865–66, pp. 61–2; Nagam Aiya *Manual*, part II, p. 537.

¹⁹Medical Mission, 1880, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

²⁰Radhika Ramasubban, 'Imperial Health in British India, 1857–1900', in Roy MacLeod and Milton Lewis (eds.), *Disease, Medicine, and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 41.

ceremonial duty'.²¹ Thus, unlike the British in colonial India, Travancore State had almost no need to provide health care for its military force to defend its own regime. Consequently the attention of the Maharaja and the government was largely focussed on the medical care of the people.

In conformity with the statement made by the Maharaja, free medical relief was given to the people until about 1940 when the Travancore government passed certain rules to collect charges for treatment.²² The government medical institutions also treated the lower castes and in this respect its medical policy was very different from its educational policy, which almost completely excluded the lower castes from government schools, at least until the late nineteenth century.²³ As Table 7 indicates, the General Hospital in Trivandrum treated a large number of Izhavas and other lower castes as early as in 1879-80.

However, it is also true that the lower castes were not treated in an equal way. The higher and lower classes were accommodated in separate wards.²⁴ In addition, the Pulayas, the lowest caste, were not admitted to the General Hospital or other government hospitals until the early twentieth century. In 1905 the Pulayas in Trivandrum submitted a petition to the government and as a result a disused kitchen was converted into a ward for their use.²⁵ Not surprisingly, even after that, they had great difficulties in receiving treatment. An officer from the Salvation Army described the treatment which the Pulayas received as follows:

They were not allowed to approach a Government hospital; instead they had to huddle under a tree some distance from the dispensary until the doctor, after having attended to all other patients and about to leave, would ask what the 'others' were suffering from. He would then give verbal instructions to the compounders to dispense medicines, or permit serious

²¹G.O. No. 399, 400, 26 June 1899, PSP, L/P&S/7/263, OIOC; G.O. No. 207, 208, 30 Mar. 1894, MPP.

²²Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. iv, p. 226.

²³Perhaps this was because providing medical relief for the low castes was considered less harmful to the existing social order than providing education. Education was undoubtedly one of the important means by which the low castes could uplift themselves in society.

²⁴TAR, 1865-66, p. 68.

²⁵Kabri and Krishnan, 'Social Intermediation', p. 16.

Table 7: Castes and Communities Treated in the General Hospital in 1879–80

| Caste and community | In-patient | Out-patient |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Brahmins | 105 | 1,714 |
| Castes between Brahmins and Nayers | 90 | 576 |
| Nayers | 308 | 2,680 |
| Artisan Class | 51 | 601 |
| Izhavas | 213 | 1,570 |
| Lower Classes of Hindus | 55 | 857 |
| Mahomedans | 35 | 653 |
| Europeans | 6 | 271 |
| East Indians | 44 | 956 |
| Native Christians | 245 | 2,527 |
| Total | 1,152 | 12,405 |

Source: Travancore Administration Report for 1879–80, p.57

cases to be admitted to the Pulaya ward, a shed built some distance from the main hospital.²⁶

The lower castes were thus discriminated against in their medical treatment. But, nevertheless, it can be said that the state was more generous towards the lower castes in the area of medicine than in the sphere of education.

In addition to the desire of the state to express its Hindu charitable role, a strong public demand for medical aid was also one of the reasons that promoted the development of medicine in Travancore. In the year 1886–87, for example, the *Administration Report* stated that 'numerous petitions have been received for opening new hospitals and dispensaries in different parts of the country'.²⁷ At the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, demands for the opening of medical dispensaries were frequently expressed.²⁸ The state had to respond to these demands and as a result the number of patients treated in the government institutions increased sharply, as

²⁶L.V.L. Fletcher, *Brother of All* (London: Salvation Army, 1956), p. 8.

²⁷TAR, 1886–87, p. 139.

²⁸For example, SMPAP, 1904, p. 28; 1912, p. 70; and 1919, p. 63.

we have seen in Table 5. The necessity to respond to the growing public demand for medical aid was undoubtedly one of the principal reasons the state supported the medical missions rather generously, as will be seen.

Public Health and the Rockefeller Foundation

Although medical relief developed in Travancore in the second half of the nineteenth century, public health, except vaccination, was not paid much attention to. It is true that the government began to spend small sums for the sanitation of the capital city of Trivandrum from 1876-77 onwards and in 1880-81, a committee appointed by the government presented recommendations which included the construction of public latrines; the removal of night-soil and sweepings to a distance from the town; and the construction of a number of dust boxes.²⁹ But constructive public health work did not start in Travancore until 1895 when the Sanitary Department was organized. Vaccination, maintaining statistics and sanitation were the major activities of this department³⁰ which was perhaps established as a result of a shift in medical administration in British India. In the late nineteenth century the British began to argue that the health of Europeans in India could only be assured through wider medical and sanitary measures. Also, the advances in bacteriology made by Pasteur, Koch and others at the time encouraged the use of preventive medicine.³¹

The next very important development in public health services in Travancore was co-operation with the Rockefeller Foundation and the subsequent formation of the Public Health Department in 1933-34. In 1928, in order to introduce a higher standard of public health, the Travancore government requested the Rockefeller Foundation to depute one of their representatives to the state to give advice on conducting public health work 'on up-to-date lines'.³²

The Rockefeller Foundation's efforts to develop public health began in the early twentieth century in the USA. In 1909 they founded the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease. Their initial concern was with southern USA

²⁹Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, pp. 532-3.

³⁰Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, pp. 759-60; Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, p. 499.

³¹David Arnold, 'Touching the Body', p. 58.

³²Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 762.

where they tried to 'expand southern agricultural productivity, and prepare southern whites and blacks for industrialization in largely northern owned mills and factories'. For this purpose, they sought to diffuse education and public health in the south.³³ But soon their attention went to the rest of the world as well. In 1913 their International Health Commission was created, and the hookworm programme was extended abroad. In 1914 they began a campaign against yellow fever, and in 1915 another campaign against malaria.³⁴ They also helped to create a number of schools at Harvard University and elsewhere to train personnel in public health. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine was established by them in 1923.³⁵ Thus from the early twentieth century, the public health of non-European people became the increasing concern of the capitalists in the USA. Improving the public health of people in developing countries was considered important for 'neo-colonialism' or the 'informal empire' which supplied raw materials to the developed world and also provided consumers for western commodities.³⁶

The Foundation's first serious commitment in India was in the Madras Presidency in the early 1920s. Their main concern was with the hookworm problem in the Presidency, where 'more than 70 per cent' of the population was infected by the worm. Treatment was first carried out in the plantations and then extended to other parts of the Presidency.³⁷ Apart from hookworm surveys and treatment, the Foundation helped the Madura District Board in the Madras Presidency conduct rural health work, including sanitary education and the construction of public latrines. Although similar activities were carried out subsequently in other parts of the Presidency, the

³³E.R. Brown, 'Public Health in Imperialism: Early Rockefeller Programs at Home and Abroad', *American Journal of Public Health*, 66, 9 (1976), p. 898.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 899.

³⁵Donald Fisher, 'Rockefeller Philanthropy and the British Empire: The Creation of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine', *History of Education*, 7, 2 (1978), pp. 129, 139, 141.

³⁶Soma Hewa, *Colonialism, Tropical Disease and Imperial Medicine: Rockefeller Philanthropy in Sri Lanka* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), pp. 7, 13, 67-8.

³⁷*Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report*, 1923, pp. 110-11; *Ibid.*, 1924, pp. 116-7. Although the relationship between the Rockefeller Foundation and British imperialism is not very clear, there seems no doubt that the British, who did not have ample resources, largely tried to utilize its activities in India.

Foundation's attention was almost confined to the hookworm problem in the Presidency.³⁸ In 1927, the Mysore government requested the Foundation to carry out a public health survey, after which arrangements were made to provide for the service of a consultant and a sanitary engineer as well as conduct a rural health demonstration and set up malaria field stations.³⁹

In 1928, Burma, Punjab and Travancore requested the Foundation to help them set up public health organizations.⁴⁰ As a result, the Foundation decided to assist in the development of public health administration in Burma and Travancore for the next several years, but they apparently declined further assistance to Punjab. The reasons for this decision are not clear. But as far as literacy and the educational standard of the population was concerned, there was a great difference between Punjab and the other two applicants. In 1931, Burma attained a literacy rate of 36.8 per cent, and Travancore of 28.9 per cent, while the literacy rate in Punjab was as low as 6.3 per cent.⁴¹ Generally, education and literacy are thought to be very closely related to health status 'via improved nutrition, hygiene and reproductive health',⁴² and the Foundation may have considered that a higher standard of education was necessary for the successful operation of their mission. Moreover, at least in Travancore, medical institutions were well developed compared with other parts of India, as we have seen, and therefore Travancore may have been considered an appropriate place for the Rockefeller Foundation to demonstrate its philanthropy.

In any case, the Foundation's work in Travancore began in 1928 when the state sent its request for aid to the Foundation. One of the reasons for the request was the cholera epidemic of 1927-29 which caused 10,727 deaths in Travancore. In fact cholera repeatedly took a heavy toll, and combating the disease was one of the main objects of organizing a new Public Health Department.⁴³ Thus Dr W.P.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 1926, p. 114.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 1927, p. 125; 1928, p. 202.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 1928, p. 202.

⁴¹*Census of India, 1931*, vol. 1, *India, Part I, Report* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 339.

⁴²David R. Phillips and Yola Verhasselt, 'Introduction: Health and Development', in David R. Phillips and Yola Verhasselt (eds.), *Health and Development* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 5.

⁴³Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, pp. 775-6.

Jacocks, a representative of the Foundation, arrived in 1929 and submitted 'a modern Public Health Scheme' after touring the country to study the local conditions and requirements. Besides, two officers of the Travancore government were deputed to the USA to undergo special training, and the Foundation also awarded foreign and Indian fellowships to six of the officers who dealt with public health work.⁴⁴

In 1930, the suggested working programme was put into operation. It was a very comprehensive and advanced programme and comprised a hookworm treatment campaign, public health education, epidemiological and vital statistical investigations, health unit work, medical entomology and plague control measures.⁴⁵ In this way, the Public Health Department was formed. The work of the new department was to maintain statistics, control communicable diseases, vaccinate the population, implement plague control measures, conduct malaria and filariasis surveys and help control these diseases.⁴⁶

In addition to these activities, the management of the Public Health Laboratory and the Health Unit at Neyyattinkara and the conducting of maternity and child welfare work, public health education and rural sanitation were some of the principal activities of the department. The Public Health Laboratory had several stations—the Bacteriological Section, the Research Section, the Small-pox Vaccine Section, the Medical Entomology Section, the Chemical Examiner's Section and the Public Analyst's Section. It conducted various diagnostic tests and other examinations and supplied various kinds of vaccines such as typhoid, cholera and small-pox vaccines.⁴⁷ This laboratory seems to have been a very advanced one. It was the only laboratory in India where special blood tests, called Kahn's, Hinton's and Wasserman's, were conducted at the time.⁴⁸

The Health Unit work at Neyyattinkara was also one of the most important activities that the Rockefeller Foundation engaged in. This unit was a comprehensive rural health organization which

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 764.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 764; *TAR*, 1938-39, p. 171.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 1938-39, p. 171.

⁴⁷*TAR*, 1938-39, pp. 175-6.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 175.

covered an area of 40 square miles with a population of 73,340. Perhaps the most important aspect of this unit work was that it served as 'a demonstration and training centre for health workers'.⁴⁹ In this unit, maternity and child care was paid great attention to. Free midwifery was provided, and pre-natal and infant clinics were held in ten clinic centres. In 1938-39, 47.5 per cent of the total number of pregnant women was registered and received five months' pre-natal care.⁵⁰ There can be no doubt that this unit produced a large number of health workers and that these workers contributed considerably to the development of public health in Travancore and hence in today's Kerala.

Public health education was also an important part of the public health work in Travancore. The total number of lectures and talks on public health given in the year 1938-39 was 1044 to an estimated audience of 145,000 persons. In this year, an intensive lecture campaign on bored-hole latrines was carried out in rural areas. Besides, public health exhibitions were organized and pamphlets were distributed. Films on public health were also purchased by the Public Health Department.⁵¹ In addition, the department paid attention to rural sanitation work including the sinking of new wells; the repairs, cleaning and disinfection of existing wells; and the sanitation of markets, fairs and places where festivals were held.⁵² Thus the work of the Foundation undoubtedly contributed to the development of public health in Travancore and there is also no doubt that their operations in Travancore were also a great success for the Foundation itself. The directors of the Foundation visited Travancore and expressed 'their high appreciation of the public health activities in the State'.⁵³

Medical Activities of the LMS

In addition to the medical activities of Travancore State and the Rockefeller Foundation, the missionaries also made a significant contribution to the development of medical facilities in Travancore. Of the

⁴⁹TAR, 1938-39, p. 177.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹TAR, 1938-39, p. 178.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 764.

missionary societies, the LMS had the most substantial medical mission in Travancore even though the number of patients it treated was much less than the number treated government institutions. Travancore State recognized the usefulness of this mission and gave it considerable support. Thus the medical mission maintained a good relationship with the Maharajas and the government.

The first medical missionary sent to Travancore was A. Ramsay. In 1838 he began medical work at Neyyur, one of the mission stations in south Travancore. But he left the mission in 1842 to take up another job in India, and the medical mission work was discontinued. Then another medical missionary, Dr Charles Leitch, was sent to Travancore in 1852. He restarted the work at Neyyur but it was discontinued again after Leitch drowned while bathing in the sea near Neyyur. In 1861 Dr John Lowe was sent to Travancore and there was a substantial increase in medical work after his arrival.⁵⁴

An American missionary pointed out at a missionary conference held in 1879 that the following factors were necessary for 'thorough Medical Mission work': (1) a medical missionary, (2) a central dispensary and hospital, (3) a medical school or class, and (4) funds.⁵⁵ The medical mission of the LMS in south Travancore had most of these facilities. A medical training class, which was undoubtedly one of the most important activities for the expansion of the medical mission, was started by Lowe in 1864. The first batch of students finished their course in 1867 and they were posted to the newly-established dispensaries in Attur, Santhapuram and Agasteespuram in 1868, Nagercoil in 1871 and in Tittuvilei in 1874. In this training class a Hindu student called Govindan received medical education. He was supported by the First Prince of Travancore and was employed by the Travancore government after he had finished the course.⁵⁶

The medical mission continued to expand. In 1902 it had 17 out-stations. The Neyyur Hospital was one of the largest hospitals in Travancore. In addition, it offered a high standard of treatment with 'up-to-date' equipment. The first X-ray machine was, for example, installed in 1923 and it was the only one of its kind in south

⁵⁴Medical Mission, 1937, Box 12, TR, CWMA.

⁵⁵*The Missionary Conference: South India and Ceylon, 1879, vol. 1. Papers, Discussions, and General Review* (Madras: Addison, 1880), p. 258.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*; Medical Mission, 1867, Box 1, TR, CWMA.

India other than the one in Madras. Also, it introduced radium for cancer treatment in 1930.⁵⁷ As a result, the hospital often accepted cases which the government hospitals were unable to treat.⁵⁸ E.A. Harlow, a medical missionary, wrote in 1931 that 'the death rate of our surgical cases is substantially less than it is in the large hospitals in London and in the Presidency towns in India'.⁵⁹

The medical mission in Travancore was by far the largest mission of its kind set up by the LMS. In 1930, for example, the LMS had 23 medical mission stations which treated 372,410 patients world-wide, while the medical mission in Travancore alone treated 163,121 patients. This means that it treated 43.8 per cent of the total number of patients treated by all the medical missions of the LMS.⁶⁰ There can be no doubt that the Directors of the LMS were very determined to develop this work in Travancore. Well-qualified medical missionaries were almost continuously sent to Travancore. Table 8 shows the names and qualifications of the medical missionaries along with the years in which they worked in Travancore.

In addition to the efforts of the LMS itself, another and perhaps more important reason for the development of medical work was that the medical mission received considerable help from the Maharajas and their government. They gave large sums in subscriptions and grants to the mission. Table 9 shows the sources of income of the medical mission in 1875.

The medical mission thus greatly depended on 'subscriptions from India' at the early stage of its development. Among the subscribers, the Maharaja and other members of the ruling family were the most important to the missionaries. The Maharaja afforded the largest amount in annual subscriptions. In 1875, for example, Rs 200 was given to the mission by the Maharaja. But what was more important than the amount was the influence of the Maharaja. In 1882 T.S. Thomson, a medical missionary, wrote that 'His Highness the Maharaja, his minister and those under them who have followed their good example in helping on this charitable work,

⁵⁷'Kanyakumari Medical Mission: Important Events at a Glance', Neyyur Hospital Library.

⁵⁸Medical Mission, 1902, Box 7, TR, CWMA.

⁵⁹Medical Mission, 1931, Box 11, TR, CWMA.

⁶⁰*LMS Annual Report for 1930*, p. 159.

Table 8: LMS Medical Missionaries in Travancore, 1838–1937

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| M.A. Ramséy | 1838 to 1840 (or 1842) |
| C. Leitch, MRCS Edin. | 1852 to 1854 |
| John Lowe, FRCS Edin. | 1861 to 1868 |
| T.S. Thomson, LRCP&S, Edin. | 1873 to 1885 |
| E. Sargood Fry, MB, CM, Edin. | 1885 to 1892 |
| A. Fells, MB, CM, Edin. | 1892 to 1905 |
| S.H. Davies, LRCP&S, Edin. | 1901 to 1902 |
| W.C. Bentall, LRCP&S, Edin. | 1905 to 1913 |
| H.C. Orrin, FRCS, Edin. | 1909 to 1910 |
| H. Bulloch, MB, CHB, Edin. | 1911 to 1913 |
| S.H. Pugh, MB, CHB, Edin. | 1912 to 1926 |
| G.A.P. Thomas, MB, CHB, Edin. | 1913 to 1916 |
| T. Howard Somervell, MA, MB, BCH, FRCS, Eng. | 1923 |
| Dudley P. Marks, BA, MB, BCH, FRCS, Eng. | 1926 to 1928 |
| Ian M. Orr, MD, CHB, FRCS, Edin. | 1927 to 1936 |
| D. Joan Thompson, MA, MB, BCH | 1936 |
| J.R. Davidson, MD | 1937 |

Source: South Travancore Medical Mission, 1937, Box 12, TR, CWMA. MRCS stands for Member of the Royal College of Surgeons; FRCS, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons; LRCP&S, Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons; CM, Master of Surgery; MB, Bachelor of Medicine; CHB, Bachelor of Surgery; MA, Master of Arts; Eng., England; and Edin., Edinburgh. BCH was probably the same as CHB.

have our best thanks'.⁶¹ In fact, in 1875, Dewan Seshiah Sastri subscribed Rs 40, Nanoo Pillay (Dewan, 1877–80) Rs 30, and S. Shungarasubbier (Dewan, 1892–98) Rs 90.⁶² Other high-caste Hindus such as tahsildars subscribed a considerable amount as well. The tahsildar of Eraneal in south Travancore, for example, donated

⁶¹Medical Mission, 1882, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

⁶²Medical Mission, 1875, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

Table 9: Income for 1875 of the LMS Medical Mission, Travancore

| Source of income | Rs | A | |
|---|------|----|----|
| Subscriptions from India | 2797 | 1 | 6 |
| Subscriptions from Scotland and England | 698 | 4 | 0 |
| Interest on surplus famine fund | 137 | 8 | 0 |
| Balance from last year | 51 | 8 | 11 |
| Sale of medicine and books | 116 | 2 | 0 |
| Amount in collecting boxes | 31 | 12 | 10 |
| Total | 3832 | 5 | 3 |

Source: Medical Mission, 1875, Box 2, TR, CWMA

Rs 70 in 1877.⁶³ There is no doubt that their subscriptions would have been much less if it had not been for the Maharaja's favourable attitude towards the medical mission.

Meanwhile, as the medical mission developed, it came to depend more and more on sales of medicines, fees or 'offerings' collected from the patients. In 1897 the medical mission adopted a plan to sell medicines to all who could afford to pay for them.

As Table 10 shows, the income collected from sales of medicines, fees and 'offerings' in 1914 was about Rs 18,660 in total, which means more than 65 per cent of the income was collected from patients in 1914. In 1928, this figure rose to more than 70 per cent.⁶⁴ The medical mission thus became increasingly independent of the Travancore government financially, though it still received considerable sums in the form of grants from the Travancore government.

Apart from these annual subscriptions, the Maharajas helped the missionaries to establish hospitals and dispensaries. In about 1874, the Travancore government handed an old rest house at Tittuvilei in south Travancore to the missionaries and bore the entire cost of Rs 877 to convert it into a dispensary.⁶⁵ Again in 1878, the government gave an old salt store to the mission at a village called Kulasen-

⁶³Medical Mission, 1877, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

⁶⁴Medical Mission, 1928, Box 10, TR, CWMA.

⁶⁵*TDC Annual Report*, 1880, p. 4.

Table 10: Income for 1914 of the LMS Medical Mission, Travancore

| Source of income | Rs. | A. | P. |
|--|--------|----|----|
| Sales of medicines | 15,077 | 11 | 3 |
| Fees | 1,310 | 15 | 3 |
| Offerings of patients | 2,273 | 12 | 7 |
| Subscriptions from Great Britain and Australia | 4,280 | 0 | 8 |
| Subscriptions from India | 217 | 0 | 0 |
| Grants from the Travancore government | 1,918 | 0 | 11 |
| Grants from the LMS | 1,112 | 0 | 0 |
| Medical Class Fund | 623 | 4 | 1 |
| Balance from 1913 | 100 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 28,676 | 15 | 5 |

Source: Medical Mission, 1914, Box 9, TR, CWMA.

garam, which was located 'in the middle of the most malarious district' in the state. The Maharaja also granted Rs 200 for a new building for the Neyyur Hospital.⁶⁶ In addition, retired Dewans such as Nanoo Pillay and Rama Row supported the medical mission. In 1883 Nanoo Pillay laid the foundation stone of the mission dispensary in Attur.⁶⁷ Rama Row, after his retirement, requested the missionaries to superintend a dispensary which he built in south Travancore. He donated the dispensary along with some rice lands to the mission.⁶⁸

It is true that, especially after the late nineteenth century, the state became less generous in supporting the medical mission of the LMS. In 1897 the Travancore government instituted a grant-in-aid system for medical institutions and then declined to give grants to the LMS institutions except the Neyyur Hospital and one other dispensary, on the ground that the men in charge had no government qualifications. However, it is doubtful that the government had any

⁶⁶Medical Mission, 1937, Box 12, CWMA; J.H. Hacker, *Memoirs of Thomas Smith Thomson* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1887), p. 58.

⁶⁷Medical Mission, 1883, TR, Box 3, CWMA.

⁶⁸*LMS Chronicle*, 1901, pp. 165-5.

intention of impeding the development of the medical mission, or that the missionaries understood this to be so. Even after the commencement of the grant-in-aid system, A. Fells, an LMS medical missionary, wrote in his report for 1900 that the Maharaja was 'always a true friend'.⁶⁹ Even in the 1930s their relationship does not seem to have deteriorated. In 1935 I.M. Orr, a medical missionary, reported on the co-operation between the medical mission and the Travancore government during the malaria epidemic and the cholera outbreak.⁷⁰ This was largely because such epidemics were very serious problems in Travancore and even in the 1930s took the lives of a great number of people. In July 1936 the AGG reported that 908 people had died from cholera and 333 from smallpox in Travancore since the beginning of 1936.⁷¹ The state certainly needed the help of the missionaries. In addition, the ruling family privately maintained a close relationship with the medical missionaries of the LMS. In 1933 the Maharaja visited the Neyyur Hospital to attend the opening ceremony of a new building and stated that 'He [Dr Pugh, an LMS medical missionary] was a trusted advisor of my family and myself ... I am happy that the friendly relations between my family and the Doctors in charge of institution have been maintained right through'. The Maharaja then announced that he would donate Rs 1000 to the hospital.⁷² Also, the state keenly supported the medical activities of the Salvation Army, which rapidly developed from the late nineteenth century.

Medical Activities of the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army had a big hospital in Nagercoil and dispensaries in other places. There is no doubt that its medical institutions contributed considerably to the development of medicine in Travancore, and the Maharaja and the government supported them fairly generously, as in the case of the LMS medical mission.

⁶⁹Medical Mission, 1900, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁷⁰Medical Mission, 1935, TR, Box 12, CWMA.

⁷¹Fortnight Report, second half of July 1936, CRR R/1/1/2791, OIOC.

⁷²C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, *Speeches and Messages of His Highness Sir Bala Rama Varma, Maharaja of Travancore* (Trivandrum: Anantha Rama Varma Press, 1938), pp. 37–8.

The Salvation Army first established its headquarters at Nagercoil in November 1892. By 1899 it had extended its activities to Tiruvalla and Mavelikara in central Travancore.⁷³ Although its activities in Travancore commenced much later than did those of the LMS or the CMS, the number of adherents it drew increased rapidly. In 1931 it had 58,991 Christians, while the CMS had 85,261.⁷⁴

The medical activity of the Salvation Army in Travancore was initiated by a man called Harry Andrew. He was sent to Nagercoil at the age of seventeen where he began to use the 'healing virtues' which he possessed from around 1893. This attracted a number of people and suggested the idea of a medical mission to the leaders of the Salvation Army. Andrew was ordered to take a dresser's course at a hospital in London. A year later, in 1895, he returned to Nagercoil and set up the Catherine Booth Dispensary. The dispensary soon developed into the Catherine Booth Hospital largely due to the efforts of Dr Percy Turner and became one of the main hospitals in Travancore.⁷⁵

Unlike Harry Andrew, Percy Turner was a highly qualified doctor when he first came to India. He was born in 1870 and was brought up in the Church of England. He became familiar with the activities of the Salvation Army in his student days and joined the movement. He qualified as M.R.C.S.Eng. (Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England), L.R.C.P.Lond. (Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London) in 1893 and was awarded the Brackenbury Scholarship in Medicine in 1894. He took the M.B.B.S. examinations in 1898 and the D.P.H. (Doctor of Public Health) Oxford in 1899.⁷⁶

⁷³Joseph Chako, 'The History of the Salvation Army in Kerala', B.D. Thesis, United Theological College, 1979, pp. 24, 39.

⁷⁴*Census of India, 1931*, vol. xxviii, *Travancore*, Part 1, *Report* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1932), p. 338.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 83-4; Solveig Smith, *By Love Compelled* (London: Salvationist Publishing, 1981), pp. 77-9. Harry Andrew was transferred to Gujarat in 1903 and here he established a hospital called the Emery Hospital. Then he was sent to America to take a degree in medicine and surgery. In 1912, he returned to India and opened a hospital in Moradabad in the United Provinces. The Salvation Army had three central hospitals in India in 1919, all of which were originally established by Harry Andrew.

⁷⁶Copy of Obituary Notices sent by Mr A.E. Stevens, File No. Turner 1, Salvation Army International Heritage Centre.

Dr Turner sailed for India in November 1900 and took charge of the dispensary in 1901. Soon after his arrival he sought to transform the Catherine Booth Dispensary into a general hospital, and on 27 April 1901, the stone-laying ceremony of the Catherine Booth Hospital took place. The hospital continued to develop under Turner's supervision.⁷⁷ In 1919 it had seven acres of land on which were built seventeen buildings including wards accommodating sixty patients, an operating theatre and a laboratory. In addition, by 1919 it had four branch hospitals, twenty three medical officers, thirty compounders and a number of nurses.⁷⁸

Turner had a very clear idea about the function of the medical mission. He itemized their 'future plan of work' as follows:

- (a) The actual medical and surgical work of the Hospital.
- (b) The training of native assistants, who shall be able to hereafter take charge of branch dispensaries.
- (c) The imparting to a larger number of our purely evangelistic workers some amount of knowledge of the rudiments of Hygiene and of 'First Aid', so that in the villages where they are at work they may be able to be of some assistance in leading their people in ways of physical as well as spiritual health.⁷⁹

Like the LMS, the Salvation Army paid great attention to the training of Indian assistants. To this end a four-year medical course was started with financial aid from the Maharaja of Travancore. Three men were trained in the first medical class and were put in charge of the branch hospitals after completing the course.⁸⁰ Later another medical class was organized which was much larger than the former. In addition to the Salvationists, fourteen private students were allowed to join the class. The majority of them were Syrian Christians.⁸¹ During his time, Turner trained six Salvationists and sent them to branch hospitals. Some hospitals were built in places where malaria was rampant.⁸² At the time malaria was one of the most serious diseases in Travancore

⁷⁷*All the World*, Jan. 1901, p. 34; *ibid.*, Sept. 1914, p. 538; Smith, *By Love Compelled*, pp. 78–9.

⁷⁸*All the World*, 1919, p. 31.

⁷⁹*All the World*, Mar. 1902, p. 130.

⁸⁰Smith, *By Love Compelled*, p. 78; 'Light, Healing and Life', *Medical India*, p. 12, folder 2, International Heritage Centre.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸²'Memorials of Colonel Turner', File Turner 1, International Heritage Centre.

and affected many people spread over a very large area. In particular, the foothill area from Bhuthappandy, about ten miles north of Nagercoil, to Thodupula, about thirty miles north-east to Kottayam, formed 'a hyper-endemic belt of malaria'.⁸³ There was no doubt that the people in this area were in great need of medical relief and this may have been one of the reasons why the state supported the medical activities of the Salvation Army.

As regards the patients, from January to September 1905, for example, the Catherine Booth Hospital dealt with 3047 out-patients. Among them, 1380 were caste Hindus.⁸⁴ Thus, a great number of high-caste patients were treated. This was partly because the hospital itself paid considerable attention to the caste feelings of Hindus. A private ward and a separate kitchen were provided for the in-patients who desired to maintain, according to the Salvation Army's report, 'the dignity and purity of his twice-born condition', although this privilege was also available to wealthy low-caste patients. In addition, patients were generally expected to provide their own food if possible.⁸⁵ This measure, needless to say, helped the higher castes to 'avoid caste pollution' at least to some extent. The hospital thus attracted a large number of high-caste patients and this was extremely favourable for their religious activities, a point which will be examined later.

Meanwhile, the Maharaja and his government, showed considerable interest in the medical work of the Salvation Army. In addition to giving grants to the hospital and its branches, the Maharaja from time to time gave large donations for the construction of new wards and for other purposes. In 1912, for example, Maharaja Sri Mulam donated Rs 3350 in the name of his consort for the erection of a new men's ward. In 1922 the thatched walls of the first ward were replaced by a solid masonry block and half the cost was borne by

⁸³Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 777.

⁸⁴'Notes of Inspection', Private Papers, File Turner 1, International Heritage Centre.

⁸⁵'Light, Healing and Life' p. 14. Similar arrangements were made in government institutions. 'The higher and lower castes' were accommodated in separate wards, and 'cooks of caste' were provided to prepare their diet in the Civil Hospital. The LMS also had 'separate wards for the use of the well-to-do patients'. *TAR*, 1865-66, p. 68; *Medical Mission, Ten-Years Review*, 1900, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

the Maharaja and his consort.⁸⁶ The Maharaja also donated 'a tri-wheeled motor' which was the first of its type in Travancore. This gesture along with other donations undoubtedly succeeded in spreading the idea of the Maharaja being a charitable ruler. When Turner travelled in this vehicle, 'everybody knew Highness's friend Dr Turner was going to attend patients' by car.⁸⁷ The donations from the Maharaja continued into the 1930s. In 1934, a new 'Administrative and Outpatients Block' was opened by C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, who was then the Legal and Constitutional Advisor to the Maharaja and who was also known for his anti-Christian policy, as will be seen in the next chapter. Maharaja Sri Chitra donated Rs 10,000 towards the construction of this block.⁸⁸

There is no doubt that the state encouraged the medical activities of the Salvation Army as well as those of the LMS. It certainly appreciated the services of a highly-qualified doctor like Turner, having a modern and well-equipped hospital and dispensaries, and the training facilities in the hospital which produced a number of doctors and nurses. In addition, the state seems to have expected the Salvation Army to provide medical relief especially to the poor people, whom the government institutions were not always willing to deal with, although a large number of high castes were treated there as well. In a letter to Turner, the Maharaja wrote in 1912 that 'I realize that your labours on behalf of the poorer portion of my subjects are prompted by love and charity'.⁸⁹ On the other hand, by patronizing medical institutions, the Maharaja was able to gain the reputation of being a charitable ruler within the convention of Hindu society and dharma. In this sense, the donation of the 'tri-wheeled motor', which greatly advertised the Maharaja's charitable nature, was aptly symbolic.

⁸⁶ 'Catherine Booth Hospital', 1922, p. 24, Medical India A, folder 2, International Heritage Centre; 'Light, Healing and Life', p. 8; 'Worthy Notes of Mention', p. 2, Turner 1, International Heritage Centre.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ 'Another Medical Advance', *War Cry*, Sep. 1934. vol. 40, No. 9, p. 3.

⁸⁹ 'Light, Healing and Life', pp. 7–8.

The CMS and Medical Activities

Unlike the LMS and the Salvation Army, the CMS did not send medical missionaries to Travancore and consequently did not have any substantial medical institutions. Nevertheless, it did provide medical relief to the people, though on a considerably smaller scale and not on a permanent basis.

In 1870, the CMS missionaries had dispensaries at Kankankulam, Mavelikara and Tiruwalla. At Mavelikara, a 'medical evangelist' called G.J. Kuruwella was in charge of the dispensary in which 1134 patients were treated in 1870.⁹⁰ Thus, there were some CMS dispensaries, but it is not clear how long they continued. In 1873, when the CMS missionaries expressed their view on the 'medical agency', they were very doubtful of its success without the direct supervision of a European doctor⁹¹.

Apart from the dispensary, however, the CMS missionaries conducted some medical activities. In 1884, A.F. Painter, a CMS missionary who was in charge of work among a tribal people called the Arrians, presented a report on his medical activities. He received medicines from the Travancore government and other bodies including an institution called the Medical Missionary Association. He wrote that 'the death rate among our people has been far below the average, due, under God, to my being thus able to doctor them. I ... only wish that my medical knowledge increased with my practice'.⁹² This kind of practice was widely prevalent among the CMS missionaries in Travancore. In 1933, the Diocesan Council of the CMS stated that 'non-professional individual missionaries have often successfully tried to minister to the simple needs of the sick around them'.⁹³ However, recognizing the necessity of providing more professional medical relief, the CMS missionaries had at least two 'Floating Dispensaries' in the 1930s. These were boats which travelled through the backwaters with medical facilities. They also had a dispensary and a maternity centre by the 1930s.⁹⁴

⁹⁰*Madras Church Missionary Record*, Mar. 1871, p. 73; *Ibid.*, Nov. 1871, pp. 326-7.

⁹¹Minutes of Travancore Conference, 10 Dec. 1873, Mission Book M30, CMSA.

⁹²'Travancore and Cochin', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, April 1885, p. 319.

⁹³*Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Magazine*, Nov. 1933, p. 149.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, July 1935, pp. 90-1; *Ibid.*, Mar. 1937, pp. 37-8.

The CMS sent some medical missionaries to other parts of India, especially to the North-West Frontier, and in the 1880s, the CMS founded mission hospitals in this area. This was largely because other methods of diffusing Christianity were considered 'inefficient or impossible' due to the 'fierce fanaticism' of the Muslims living there.⁹⁵ Although it is not clear why the CMS did not send any medical missionaries to Travancore, it was at least one of the reasons that priority was given to more difficult areas like the NWP.

Religious Activities of the Medical Missions

The medical mission had two main roles for the missionaries in terms of religious activities. One was to convert people, especially the higher castes, and the other was to prevent converted Christians from re-conversion, especially when they fell ill. J. Knowles, an LMS missionary, stated in 1898:

Medical work will enable the Mission to touch the hearts of classes who otherwise are likely to remain shut up in their Heathenism... It is also a great help with Christian adherents in the struggle against demonism and superstition.⁹⁶

Prevention of re-conversion was undoubtedly an important purpose. As is well known, it was widely believed that diseases were caused by supernatural things such as demons and goddesses. A number of Christians resorted to 'Heathen practices' when they became ill. Especially at the outbreak of smallpox, they tended to join their 'old heathen associates' to make offerings to the goddess Mariamman, who was supposed to cause the disease.⁹⁷ Therefore, it was an important function of the medical mission to cure Christians with western medicine so as to prevent them from reverting to their former practices. But perhaps a much more important purpose was to establish contact with the higher castes whom the

⁹⁵Gibbs, *The Anglican Church in India*, pp. 330–1; *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World* (London: James Nisbet, 1889), p. 390.

⁹⁶Quilon, 1898, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁹⁷Attingal, 1931, TR, Box 11, CWMA; Medical Mission, 1902, TR, Box 7, CWMA; *Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Record*, Aug. 1908, vol. 18, No. 4.

missionaries had not succeeded in converting through their educational institutions.

As we have seen, a large number of high-caste Hindus was treated in the mission hospitals. Undoubtedly, many of these high-caste patients came in contact with the missionaries for the first time. They were taught Christianity when they visited hospitals and dispensaries.

The LMS and the Salvation Army conducted religious activities in their medical institutions from the beginning. In 1862, John Lowe, a medical missionary of the LMS, reported:

Seldom fewer than seventy or eighty, including patients and their friends, are at present at the religious service conducted when the Dispensary opens in the morning... Tracts or portions of Scripture are given to all who can read, and the Catechist spends some time in personal conversation with the patients in the waiting room.⁹⁸

The practice had not changed substantially even sixty years later. In 1922, at the Neyyur Hospital, there was a meeting at the entrance hall at 8:30 where the Gospel was read and explained. In addition, there were meetings twice a week in the wards for those who could not come to the hall. Moreover, the 'hospital evangelist' used the opportunity which the hospital offered 'at all hours all the day long'.⁹⁹ The Salvation Army also had a meeting between nine and ten o'clock in the morning to give 'spiritual help' to those who came to the hospital.¹⁰⁰

However, it is doubtful that the missionaries succeeded in their efforts to convert high castes through medical relief and associated religious activities. It is true that the missionaries reported from time to time how influential their medical mission was. But they do not seem to have enough evidence of cases of actual conversion. One medical missionary wrote in 1929: 'Although there has been no conversion to Christianity, yet the living seed which is being sown is gradually taking root in the hearts of the people'.¹⁰¹ In any case, it is still true that the missionaries utilized the opportunity to

⁹⁸*TDC Annual Report*, 1861, p. 22.

⁹⁹The Hospital Neyyoor, 1922, TR, Box 10, CWMA.

¹⁰⁰'Duties of the Assistant Medical Officers', 1916, Turner 2, International Heritage Centre.

¹⁰¹Medical Mission, 1929, TR, Box 10 CWMA.

establish contact with the Indians in their medical institutions, even if the results, in terms of actual conversions, were disappointing.

Meanwhile, these activities, in a sense, meant that the missionaries took advantage of 'the sick and the helpless who are least able to resist',¹⁰² although undoubtedly most of the missionaries did not think so. They no doubt considered the medical activities as bringing 'true comfort and peace to their souls' as well as 'relieving their bodily pains'.¹⁰³ However, the medical activities of the missionaries, as in the case of their educational activities, gradually became a target for criticism from the higher castes. At the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, one member, T. Marthanan Tampi, stated in 1907 that the missionaries used medical relief as well as education and attendance in courts for the purpose of conversion.¹⁰⁴ In 1935, a CMS missionary in Travancore reported M.K. Gandhi's statement in *Young India*:

If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical service to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for proselytizing, I would certainly like them to withdraw.¹⁰⁵

These criticisms had an influence on the missionaries themselves. In 1933, a sub-committee of the CMS in Travancore and Cochin stated that:

the ministry of healing ... should never be misused so as to take the slightest advantage of the people's need of help for suffering to enforce upon them any religious teaching with which they would otherwise not have cared to come into contact.¹⁰⁶

However, it is not appropriate to over-emphasize opposition from high-caste Hindus. The criticisms made against medical missions seem to have been fewer than those against the educational activities of the missionaries. When people criticized medical missions, they almost always criticized the mission schools as well, and not vice versa. This tendency seems not to have been confined to

¹⁰²*Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Magazine*, Nov. 1933, p. 150.

¹⁰³Medical Mission, 1901, TR, Box 10 CWMA.

¹⁰⁴*SMPAP*, 1907, p. 111.

¹⁰⁵*Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Magazine*, July 1935, p. 88.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, Nov. 1933, p. 151.

Travancore. Norman Goodall has pointed out in his book on the LMS that 'No missionary activity has provoked less controversy or raised fewer objections from the uninstructed than has the work of medical missions'.¹⁰⁷ Thus it can be said that opposition from the higher castes to medical missions was less intensive than opposition to their educational activities.

Indigenous Medicine and the State

As we have seen, Travancore State made great efforts to provide medical relief to its people and also considerably helped the medical institutions run by the LMS and the Salvation Army. Although these efforts were confined to western medicine at first, the state began to take more and more interest in indigenous medicine from the late nineteenth century onwards. As a result of this policy, indigenous medicine developed greatly in Travancore.

In Travancore, every village had a native practitioner called *vaidyan*. The *vaidyan* had a knowledge of medicinal plants and herbs and collected them to make drugs himself. As to the castes of these *vaidyans*, at least the Nambudiri Brahmins, Ambaravasis, Nayers and Izhavas embraced the occupation. Some of the Nambudiri practitioners traced their medical knowledge to instructions given by Parasurama, a legendary conqueror of Kerala. The Izhavas also claimed that they had been 'from time immemorial' noted for their proficiency in the native medical art. Also, among the *vaidyans* listed in the Travancore Almanac for 1918, about 45 per cent were clearly Nayers.¹⁰⁸

The *vaidyans* treated patients who belonged to castes different from their own. Nagam Aiya described the treatment conducted by a famous Nambudiri *vaidyan* called Vayakkara Masu as follows:

the Masu and his visitors would all sit on the floor of an open front verandah of the *Illam*, while those who would not sit with him would stand in the yard or if they were of an inferior caste, outside the enclosure, but all were before him and in view and he would talk to all who had come.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 508.

¹⁰⁸ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, Part II, pp. 551-4; TAR 1930-31, p. 176; SMPAP, 1907, p. 110; Travancore Almanac, 1918, pp. 651-4.

¹⁰⁹ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, Part II, p. 555. *Illam* is a name given to the house of mainly a Nambudiri Brahmin.

Various communities including 'inferior' castes thus received medical treatment from the vaidyans. It is, however, doubtful that the lowest castes, such as the Pulayas and Parayas, were treated by these native practitioners. Ward and Conner stated after their survey from 1816 to 1820 that 'they [the Pulayas] experience little sympathy in sickness'.¹¹⁰ Also, A. Fells, an LMS medical missionary, wrote that the Pulayas and the Kuravas, both of which were among the lowest castes, called only for the help of a 'devil dancer' when they were ill.¹¹¹

Meanwhile, the Travancore government almost completely neglected indigenous medicine for many decades in the nineteenth century. It is true that it employed a vaidyan at the Civil Hospital for the purpose of supplying various drugs used in indigenous medicine for experiments.¹¹² It also employed other vaidyans for special duties to treat patients during epidemics.¹¹³ But otherwise it paid almost no attention to vaidyans and it was partly due to this neglect that the standard of their medicine was not always high.

Under these circumstances, indigenous medicine was sometimes severely criticized. Francis Day, a medical officer to the Cochin government, stated in 1863 that 'The Hindu and Mahomedan treatises upon medicine, are voluminous, and their ideas of many diseases, very absurd', although he recognized that 'they have a few good simples in use'.¹¹⁴ The missionaries more or less shared this view. As an example of 'the disastrous methods' of the vaidyans, A. Fells, an LMS medical missionary, reported a case of a woman treated by native physicians as follows:

A woman dislocated the lower jaw when yawning... To begin with, they took a handful of grain, held it over a fire till it was scorching hot and then filled the woman's mouth with it. This was repeated 3 or 4 times till the mouth was so burnt that the patient was unable to swallow even fluids. Next they steamed her head with medicated decoctions, till she was nearly suffocated. Then native bone setters were called in, but their efforts were in vain, and as soon as the patient regained the power of swallowing, native physicians administered a variety of internal medicines—all of no avail.

¹¹⁰Ward and Conner, *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States* (Trivandrum: Sircar Press, 1863), vol. I, p. 140.

¹¹¹Medical Mission, 1899, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

¹¹²TAR, 1868–69, p. 72.

¹¹³TAR, 1892–93, p. 131.

¹¹⁴Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls of Cochin its Past and its Present* (1863, reprinted New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1990), p. 422.

After 9 days of fruitless suffering and frequent offerings to demons the poor woman was taken to the dispensary [of the mission] where the momentary manipulation of the jaw by hands guided by a knowledge of the anatomy of the injured parts was all that was required to reduce the dislocation, a result equally astonishing to the patient and her friends.¹¹⁵

As is shown above, making offerings to the demons together with medical treatment was certainly the common feature of indigenous medicine.¹¹⁶ The Census Report of Cochin stated in 1901 that 'the astrologer, the exorcist and the physician' were 'all in attendance' at the sick-bed of a person: the astrologer divined the causes and prescribed propitiatory remedies; the exorcist performed a ceremony to drive out the demons and spirits; and finally the physician or vaidyan treated the patient. According to the report, this was in accordance with the common belief that 'so long as the patient is possessed, medicine can have no effect'.¹¹⁷ However, astrology had a dangerous effect as well, at least in the view of the missionaries. Dr. Fells pointed out:

Astrology is another superstition that does much mischief in many cases by declaring that a certain patient will die upon a fixed day. The astrologer often makes his assertion early in the sickness and is so implicitly believed by many that all hope is abandoned and no further effort made for the patient's recovery ...¹¹⁸

Another medical missionary reported a similar case. When Dr T.S. Thomson visited 'a Sudra patient', he was told that 'the native physicians have prognosis that today he will die', and the 'materials were kept ready for burning the body'.¹¹⁹

Confronted with a number of 'inappropriate' treatments conducted by vaidyans, T.S. Thomson suggested in 1874 that the government should order the vaidyans to be 'at least trained in the elements of Surgery and Medicine'. He also offered some induce-

¹¹⁵Medical Mission, 1898, Box 7, TR, CWMA.

¹¹⁶Velu Pillai said with regard to Ayurvedic medicine in 1940 that 'the work deals with subjects like Law, Ethics, Astrology, Prognostication, Sorcery, Phrenology, Toxicology and others and shows the relation each of these bears to the science of medicine'. Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. iv, p. 228.

¹¹⁷*Census of India, 1991*, vol. xx, *Cochin*, part 1, *Report* (Ernakulam: Government Press), p. 24.

¹¹⁸Medical Mission, 1898, Box 7, TR, CWMA.

¹¹⁹Medical Mission, 1883, TR, Box 3, CWMA.

ment to get the vaidyans to agree to be put under instruction at the Neyyur Hospital. Although this attempt was not successful, due to 'their bigoted belief and their reliance in their shastrums',¹²⁰ the Travancore government recognized the problem well. One government official wrote to T.S. Thomson that 'the quack Vythians are a curse to native society ... I know one or two native physicians, who practise successfully, but they are rare'.¹²¹ Nagam Aiya also wrote that many vaidyans were 'mere quacks', and then pointed out that the decline of indigenous medicine was 'partly on account of the general indifference to our ancient sciences and partly also on account of the want of sufficient inducement and encouragement to the native practitioners at the hands of the influential and enlightened public who have begun to largely patronise European medicine'.¹²² As K.N. Panikkar has recently pointed out, this neglect was largely due to a belief in the superiority of western culture, especially of scientific knowledge, which prevailed not only among government officials but also among the intellectuals in India.¹²³

However, this situation greatly changed towards the end of the nineteenth century. The development of nationalism was accompanied by a cultural awakening. In the 1890s, the nationalists began to claim the effectiveness and the superiority of Indian systems of medicine, and a movement began which aimed at the political authorities' recognition and patronage of indigenous medicine. The All-India Ayurvedic Congress established in 1907 was one of the results of this movement.¹²⁴ In Kerala, particularly in British Malabar, this movement was led by P.S. Variar, who himself was in practice at Kottakkal near Calicut. In 1902, he organized the Arya Vaidya Samajam for the revitalization of indigenous medicine.¹²⁵

This movement, and Hindu revivalism more generally, was certainly one of the principal factors that influenced state policy

¹²⁰Medical Mission, 1874, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

¹²¹*The Missionary Conference*, 1879, p. 263.

¹²²Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, part II, pp. 553-4.

¹²³K.N. Panikkar, 'Indigenous Medicine and Cultural Hegemony', *Studies in History*, 8, 2, n.s., 1992, p. 285.

¹²⁴David Arnold, 'Medical Priorities and Practice in Nineteenth-century British India', *South Asia Research*, 5, 2 (1985), p. 178; Bala, *Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal*, p. 89.

¹²⁵Panikkar, 'Indigenous Medicine', pp. 295-397.

towards indigenous medicine in Travancore. In 1889, the government opened an Ayurveda Patasala (School) in Trivandrum, and later sanctioned a system of medical grants to vaidyans in 1895–96. The grants were generally given to those who passed out of the Ayurveda Patasala.¹²⁶ In 1917–18, an Ayurveda Department was created. One of the main functions of this department was the revision of the curricula of the Ayurveda Patasala 'on up-to-date scientific basis to suit modern requirements'. The department also appointed a lecturer in anatomy and physiology; established a botanical garden and Ayurveda hospitals; and opened an Ayurveda pharmacy.¹²⁷ Three years later, this patasala became the Ayurveda College at which 'all the eight divisions' of indigenous medicine were taught in a course of five years. Thus Travancore State began to take an interest in indigenous medicine from the late nineteenth century. The government expenditure on indigenous medicine showed a sharp increase, as Table 11 indicates.

Table 11: Government Expenditure on Medical Institutions (Rs)

| Year | Government institutions (western) | Grant-in-aid institutions (western) | Vaidyasalas (indigenous) |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1910–11 | 349,441 | 12,701 | 15,421 |
| 1915–16 | 473,133 | 11,346 | 15,800 |
| 1920–21 | 583,428 | 18,241 | 42,628 |
| 1924–25 | 674,241 | 17,244 | 45,431 |

Source: Travancore Administration Report for 1910–11, 1915–16, 1920–21 and 1924–25.

The number of patients treated by the aided vaidyans greatly increased. In 1930–31, 431,482 patients were treated in the grant-in-aid vaidyasalas, even though 1,975,328 were still treated in the government institutions which adopted western medicine.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, compared with Travancore State, the Madras government was slow to recognize the usefulness of indigenous

¹²⁶TAR, 1896–97, p. 161.

¹²⁷TAR, 1930–31, p. 176; TAR, 1917–18, p. 66.

¹²⁸TAR, 1930–31.

medicine. In 1921, the Madras government appointed a committee and ordered it to report on 'the question of the recognition and encouragement of the indigenous systems of medicine' in vogue in the Madras Presidency. This committee submitted its report in 1923, stating that the Indian systems were logical and scientific though they were not self-sufficient, especially in the surgical line. The committee suggested that 'the followers of Indian medicine should study the scientific methods of the West' and urged the need for recognition and encouragement by the government. This committee pointed out the success achieved in Travancore and Cochin and asked: 'Is this not valuable *prima facie* evidence...?'¹²⁹ After accepting this report, the Madras government established a school of Indian Medicine in Madras in 1925.¹³⁰ But this was thirty-six years after the Travancore government had established the Ayurveda School in Trivandrum.

Perhaps the most important reason why Travancore State adopted the policy of encouraging indigenous medicine so early was that it was an 'orthodox Hindu state'. This policy had two obvious advantages for the state. Firstly, the state could show its charitable aspect through this medicine, which was rather economical in financial terms and could be given even to the 'conservative masses' especially in the rural areas.¹³¹ Secondly, by encouraging indigenous medicine it was, at the same time, by encouraging Hindu culture, on which the Hindu state was established. In other words, to help revive aspects of Hinduism was undoubtedly one of the most appropriate functions of the Hindu ruler and the government. Hence it is not surprising that the state responded very quickly and very substantially to the movement to revitalize indigenous medicine.

Conclusion

In the area of medicine, the state and the missionaries maintained a very favourable relationship. Even in the 1930s, when the state adopted apparently anti-missionary policies, the Maharaja gave large donations to the Salvation Army and to the LMS. This was mainly because the

¹²⁹*The Report of the Committee on the Indigenous Systems of Medicine*, 1923, part 1, pp. 1, 6, 14.

¹³⁰*Madras District Gazetteers, Coimbatore*, 1966, p. 430.

¹³¹*TAR*, 1930–31, p. 176; *TAR*, 1888–89, p. 187.

medical activities of the missionaries were very useful to the state, which was keen to change into a modern state and to also show its charitable nature to the people. Both the LMS and the Salvation Army sent well qualified doctors; started medical classes; and established well equipped and highly reputed hospitals and dispensaries, sometimes in areas that needed special medical relief such as those notorious for malaria. Moreover, for a state that had to respond to growing public demand for medical relief, the mission institutions were indispensable.

However, in spite of their quality and usefulness, the scale of the mission institutions was far smaller than that of the government institutions. In the year 1900-01, for example, the government institutions treated more than six times as many patients as did the LMS. Moreover, as a result of the development of indigenous medicine encouraged by the state, more and more patients had the opportunity to be treated at the non-mission institutions. This situation was, as we have seen, very different from that of education. The missionaries educated a great proportion of pupils even in the 1940s.¹³² Thus the state did not consider the religious influence of the mission institutions in medicine as seriously as in education. Criticism from the higher castes against the medical missions were far less than against mission schools. Moreover, the missionaries apparently did not succeed in converting the higher castes through their medical activities as they had intended. Hence, the mission medical institutions were far more useful than harmful to the state which regarded giving 'charity' to its people through medical relief as one of the main functions of the state. The state and the missionaries thus maintained a more favourable relationship in the area of medicine than in that of education.

By contrast, the Hindu state almost completely ignored indigenous medicine until the late nineteenth century. However, ideological changes, especially the emergence of Hindu revivalism, greatly affected government policy in the area of indigenous medicine. At the time when the British almost totally ignored the revitalization movements in indigenous medicine, Travancore State paid great attention to them. In 1889 the Ayurvedic School was

¹³² According to Ouwerkerk, professor at the Maharaja's Women's College and Travancore University from 1929 to 1939, 'Christians owned and managed some 70% of all primary schools in the state, and also nearly half the middle schools'. Louise Ouwerkerk, *No Elephant for the Maharaja*: p. 231.

opened in Trivandrum which was undoubtedly one of the earliest institutions of this kind in India, and after this the state rather enthusiastically contributed to the development of indigenous medicine. This was done mainly to show its charitable nature to the people and due to its readiness to adopt 'traditional' Hindu culture as the duty of a Hindu state.

Chapter 5

The State, the Missionaries and the Lower Castes

Introduction

As we have seen in the last two chapters, the missionaries and the state co-operated rather than clashed in Travancore. It is clear that missionary activities, and especially the continuing conversion to Christianity which occurred as a consequence, were perceived as a grave threat to the Hindu state. The state, therefore, sometimes adopted measures to reduce missionary influence. However, the state did not always pay attention to the lower castes, one of the main areas of missionary concern, nor were the motives behind its policies with regard to these castes always the same.

There is no doubt that the circumstances surrounding the lower castes in Travancore changed enormously in the late nineteenth century. They became increasingly assertive and demanded equal opportunities for education, more government jobs as well as the recognition of a higher ritual status from the state. It may be true that some castes, such as the Nadars, made efforts for their upliftment in the first half of the nineteenth century or even earlier. But the movements in the late nineteenth century were very different from the previous ones at least in terms of the scale on which they operated and the impact they had upon society and politics. Even the lowest castes, such as the Pulayas and the Parayas, who had formerly been obedient agricultural labourers, became increasingly assertive. How, then, did these changes affect the attitudes and interrelationship of the state and the missionaries? This chapter deals with this question.

Caste Disabilities in the Nineteenth Century

Disabilities and restrictions relating to the caste system in Travancore can be classified under four categories: (1) restrictions caused by *tindal* or caste pollution, (2) other restrictions including the breast-cloth restriction, which do not seem to be directly related to *tindal*, (3) forced labour or *uriyam*, and (4) slavery. Many of these disabilities and restrictions had been abolished by the late nineteenth century largely due to pressure from the missionaries and the Madras government as well as the agitations of the people themselves.

Slavery was abolished in Travancore in June 1855 and the lowest castes such as the Pulayas and Parayas were legally emancipated, though their social and economic condition remained largely the same at least until the late nineteenth century. Forced labour (*uriyam*) was also discontinued by the 1860s, when the government created a public works department which introduced waged labour. Before this, *uriyam* had been used by the state mainly for repairing roads and public buildings and for acquiring provisions during festivals and for touring officials.¹ The other disabilities and restrictions not directly related to *tindal* were, for example, that ornaments worn by the Pulayas had to be 'no more valuable than brass or beads', and that umbrellas and shoes were not permitted.² Also, the lower castes were debarred from the use of any but coarse clothes; they were not at liberty to keep milch cows; and they could not use oil mills.³ There were restrictions regarding houses as well. In one case, several houses of native Christians from the lowest castes were pulled down by the government on the ground that 'they were too good for such people [ex-slaves] to live in'.⁴ But these restrictions were also gradually abolished. As we have seen, the dress restrictions on the Shanars were largely, though not completely, removed by the proclamation issued in July 1859.

However, the disadvantages that directly related to *tindal* were the most powerful and persistent. As is well known, there was a

¹Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1976), pp. 56-7.

²Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London: John Snow, 1871), p. 45.

³P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1972), p. 280.

⁴Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London: W.H. Allen, 1883), p. 313.

notion of unapproachability, or distance pollution, in Kerala. This means that caste pollution or tindal was transmitted not only by touching but also by approaching a lower caste person within a certain distance. For example, 'a Shanar must remain twelve steps away from a Nair, a Pulayan sixty-six steps ...'.⁵ Due to this notion of tindal, the lower castes were not able to use public roads freely; they were not permitted to enter market places and courts; and they were excluded from most schools and government jobs.

The first notable step was taken by the Travancore government with regard to these disabilities in 1870. As we have seen in Chapter Two, after the assault case of Rev. W. Lee, an LMS missionary, Sir T. Madava Row wrote to the judges of the High Court, which was then called the 'Sadar Court', that the courts should be made accessible to all classes. Before this time, it was almost impossible for the lower castes to present claims to courts due to this inaccessibility. 'If a low-caste man happened to be a witness ... his evidence was taken by a *Gumastha* [agent] deputed for the purpose with the aid of an intermediate peon; owing to the distance neither the question nor the reply would be audible or intelligible'.⁶ Although there must have been a number of obstacles⁷, the lower castes began to use the judicial system, and the denial to the lower castes to the courts sometimes resulted in punishment. In 1894 the British Resident reported that a sub-magistrate was fined for having kept a Pulaya complainant outside the room during the trial.⁸ Missionaries, especially those of the LMS, utilized this newly acquired right positively. They frequently helped their converts to bring cases to the courts. In 1872, for example, 'Pulayar Christians' were assaulted by the higher castes for entering a public market. This case was finally brought before the High Court in Trivandrum after trial in two inferior courts.⁹ The missionaries continued to help their converts in this area.¹⁰ In 1907 a high-caste member of the Sri

⁵ Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p. 32.

⁶ Menon, *History of Freedom Movement*, p. 281.

⁷ For example, calims were often left unprocessed 'so that suitors are tired out and it becomes not worth their while to continue'. Mateer, *Native Life*, p. 374.

⁸ Grigg to Ch. Sec., 11 May 1894, in G.O. No. 456, 457, Foreign Dept., NAI.

⁹ TDC *Annual Report*, 1872, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰ Gladstone has also dealt with similar cases. J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and People's Movements in Kerala: A Study of Christian Mass Movements in Relation to Neo-Hindu Socio-Religious Movements in Kerala, 1850-1936* (Trivandrum: Seminary Publications, 1984), pp. 176-7.

Mulam Popular Assembly insisted that missionaries were using accessibility to courts as well as education and medical relief for the purpose of converting the Pulayas.¹¹

Along with permission to enter the courts, Madava Row also issued a circular throwing open most of the public roads in the state to all castes and communities.¹² However, this order, which was no more than a memorandum addressed to the higher officials, was 'almost a dead letter'.¹³ Regarding this matter, a CMS missionary wrote in 1883:

In some places they [Pulayas] are not allowed on the public roads, in others they are driven from them to seek shelter in the jungle on the approach of a high caste man ... They are not allowed to enter any public markets ... In ordinary cases they are not allowed nearer to the cutcherry [government office] than from 40 to 100 yards.¹⁴

The Travancore government published a circular in July 1884. In this circular the government itself admitted that 'Pooliers and other humble classes still find difficulty in getting free access to the public Courts and Cutcherries and not infrequently obstructed in the use of the public highways and markets'. It declared that all these places were now to be 'open alike to all classes' and added that any public officer who did not comply with this order would 'be visited with the severest displeasure of Government'.¹⁵ It is not clear why the government published this circular at the time but there is no doubt that there was some pressure from outside. A.F. Painter, a CMS missionary, stated that 'In 1883 [sic] in response to my appeal the Roads, Markets and Law Courts were opened to them'.¹⁶

This circular had a very strong impact on the higher castes. According to A.F. Painter, 'They [high-caste Hindus] appeared to think it impossible that the Dewan should issue such an order'.¹⁷

¹¹SMPAP, 3rd Meeting, 1907, p. 111.

¹²'The Pulayas of Travancore', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, April 1883, p. 202.

¹³A.F. Painter, 'The Outcastes in Travancore', *Madras Church Missionary Record*, Nov. 1884, p. 322.

¹⁴'The Pulayas in Travancore', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, April 1883, pp. 218-9.

¹⁵TGG, 29 July 1884.

¹⁶Copy of Memorandum by A.F. Painter, 30 Mar. 1908, Travancore and Cochin, No. 56, CMSA.

¹⁷*Madras Church Missionary Record*, Nov. 1884, p. 323.

Opposition to the lower castes entering the market places seems to have been particularly great. Painter continued: 'I heard a respectable Tamil Brahman telling some Pulayas that they would have their heads broken ... if they attempted to gain admittance'.¹⁸ It is not clear how effective this circular was, but there is no doubt that these disabilities gradually diminished towards the end of the nineteenth century even though they still prevailed in many places. In 1897 an LMS missionary pointed out that 'Pulayans may now be seen working in or near Brahmin streets—a thing impossible a few years ago'.¹⁹

Nagam Aiya's View: Conversion and the Hindu State

Thus, in the nineteenth century, some caste disabilities disappeared. Certainly, the Travancore government played an important role in these improvements, but it did so largely under pressure from the Madras government and the missionaries. From the late nineteenth century, however, the state began to pay more and more attention to the amelioration of the conditions of the lower castes. This was partly because the government came to regard the conversion of the lowest castes to Christianity as a great threat to the stability of the Hindu state. The government's view on this matter can be clearly seen in Nagam Aiya's statements. As we have seen in Chapter 1, V. Nagam Aiya was born and bred in Travancore and spent all his career in the Travancore service. He was '*a persona grata*' with the Maharaja, who was keen to make him the Dewan.²⁰ In addition, his view was expressed in the Census Report and was repeated in the State Manual as well after about twelve years, both of which were, in a sense, official publications. In the Census Report of 1891, he stated with regard to the Christian missionaries:

But for these missionaries, these humble orders of Hindu society will for ever remain unraised... the heroism of raising the low from the slough of degradation and debasement was an element of civilization unknown to ancient India... our organization as the *chief* caste of the Hindu community does not provide systematic help, or means of relief to them... The credit

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Trivandrum City Mission, 1897, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

²⁰J. Andrew, 'Confidential Note', Letter No. 132, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC; Annexure to G.O. No. 433, 431, 25 July 1905, MPP, OIOC.

of this philanthropy of going to the houses of the low, the distressed and the dirty, and putting shoulder to the wheel of depraved humanity, belongs to the Englishman. I do not think the Brahmins, or even the high caste non-Brahmins, can claim this credit.²¹

He tried to persuade high-caste Hindus to pay more attention to the lower castes in his statement, and he did so because he was seriously concerned with the growth of the Christian population. In his *Manual* published in 1906, he stated that 'There is no doubt that, as time goes on, these neglected classes will be completely absorbed into the Christian fold'.²² The reason for his concern was the fact that the people of Travancore were not homogenous and the conversion movements would destroy the stability in society. He wrote in his *Manual*:

Such a state of things [conversion of all the neglected classes], however, must add to the difficulties of administration in a country like ours which is quite unlike England or America or China where the Governments have to deal only with peoples homogenous in thought, race and religion ... we have not one nation but a congeries of nations, cut up into innumerable races, sects and castes with conflicting instincts and interests.²³

There can be no doubt that his greatest concern was to maintain the status quo or the regime which provided privileges for the high-caste Hindus. In his view the regime was very fragile at the time. The percentage of the Hindu population was small in Travancore, compared with neighbouring parts of south India, and Nagam Aiya, who was also the Census Commissioner from 1875 to 1891, well recognized this fact. He wrote in his *Manual* that 'In Travancore the Hindus form 69 per cent of the total population; in Mysore 92.5 per cent; ... Madras 89 per cent; and in Hyderabad 89 per cent'.²⁴ He stated that 'the conservative Hindu State of Travancore is much less Hindu than even the Mahomedan State of Hyderabad'.²⁵ In addition, conversion to Christianity was continuing, while the percentage of the Hindu population was almost constantly diminishing. Syrian Christians and

²¹ *Report of the Census of Travancore for 1891*, vol. I, *Report* (Madras: Addison, 1894), pp. 471-2.

²² Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1906), vol. II, p. 116.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Nagam Aiya, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 115.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

other communities came to be increasingly politicized towards the end of the nineteenth century, criticizing the privileged position of the higher castes. These facts undoubtedly made him aware of the fragility of the Hindu regime. It is no wonder that a sense of crisis emerged that continuous conversion to Christianity might change not only the population ratio but also the very nature of the state.

There is no doubt that growing Hindu revivalism all over India influenced his views. In north India, cow protection along with resistance to Christian missionaries and other issues attracted the attention of the Hindus in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁶ In the Madras Presidency, various anti-Christian associations were created.²⁷ Also in Travancore, Hindus began to open reading rooms and lecture halls in the 1880s as part of the Hindu revival movement. Thus, in 1889, an organization called the Hindu Swadharana Sabha was formed in Trivandrum by some educated Hindus for the revival of Hinduism.²⁸ Hindu preachers and philosophers came to visit Travancore. Swami Vivekananda's visit in 1896 was, in this respect, one of the most important and influential events.²⁹

Some of the central ideas of Vivekananda, the son of a leading attorney in the High Court of Bengal and one of the leaders of the Ramakrishna Movement to 'revivify Hinduism from within',³⁰ were a justification for the principle of caste which could help break down 'cruel, cold and heartless' competition in European countries; and a defence of this same caste system by criticizing its evil aspects such as untouchability and the privileges afforded to the higher castes.³¹ Vivekananda, accordingly, showed much interest in the notoriously rigid caste system of Kerala and even called it 'a

²⁶John R. McLane, 'The Early Congress, Hindu Populism, and the Wider Society', in Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert (eds.), *Congress and Indian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 55-7.

²⁷G.A. Oddie, *Hindu and Christian in South-East India* (London: Curzon Press, 1991), pp. 200-1. The Hindu Tract Society founded in Madras city in 1887 was one of these associations.

²⁸K. Jayaprasad, *RSS and Hindu Nationalism: Inroads in a Leftist Stronghold* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1991), p. 123.

²⁹J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, pp. 206-11.

³⁰*Census of India, 1931*, vol. xxviii, *Travancore*, part I, *Report* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1932), pp. 354-5.

³¹Duncan B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Politics on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), pp. 159-60.

veritable lunatic asylum of India'.³² Not surprisingly, he was greatly concerned with the Izhavas' movements. In 1891 he met Dr Palpu, one of the Izhava leaders, in Bangalore and encouraged him in his efforts.³³ He also met people of the higher castes during his visit to Travancore, such as 'leading gentlemen of Trivandrum' including the tutor to the First Prince, Professor Sundarama Iyer. According to the Census Report, 'all were struck by his intelligence and profound scholarship and by his note of greatness'.³⁴ His ideas, made intelligible to the people, particularly on his visit to Travancore, undoubtedly affected not only the Izhavas but also a number of higher castes who tried to defend the caste system as well as Hinduism. The Census Report stated with enthusiasm that 'The ideas of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have permeated the masses largely in Middle Travancore where they have become almost household objects of worship and the influence is gradually spreading ... Though the movement is entirely spiritual, it is having indirect social effects also'.³⁵

In any case, there is no doubt that these statements of Nagam Aiya, who was one of the most important officials in the Travancore government, largely represented the general view of the Maharaja and the government. In fact, shortly after Nagam Aiya expressed his views, the Travancore government adopted certain anti-missionary policies, as we have seen in Chapter 2, and also began to pay greater attention to the upliftment of the lower castes, as will be seen shortly.

Attitudes of the Landlords

We have seen that the state did not pay much attention to the conversion of the lower castes until the late nineteenth century. But what was the attitude of the landlords who employed the lowest castes such as the Pulayas and Parayas as agricultural labourers towards the conversion of their employees? Did the lowest castes become more independent after their conversion and come to reject their hereditary occupations?

³²V.T. Samuel, *One Caste, One Religion, One God: A Study of Sree Narayana Guru* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977), p. 23.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁴*Census of India, 1931, Travancore*, p. 355.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 356.

It is true that some converts came to refuse to work on Sundays, and the higher castes, not surprisingly, opposed this new practice. J. Knowles, an LMS missionary, stated in 1898 that 'they [converts] are nearly always abused whenever they refused to work on the Sabbath or when they return to work on Mondays after staying away on Sunday'.³⁶ Another LMS missionary stated in 1875 that 'These Sudras seem to fear that, if these poor people remain steadfast in Christianity, they would not be content with small wages they got from their masters, but may seek to get their livelihood from other quarters'.³⁷ However, it is doubtful that conversion to Christianity substantially changed the social and economic relations between the high-caste landlords and the low-caste labourers. Most of the low-caste labourers seem not to have changed their occupation after their conversion, despite the fears of the landlords. In about 1896, A.F. Painter of the CMS stated that the Pulaya Christians in his district were 'practically the slaves of their masters'.³⁸ I.H. Hacker, an LMS missionary, similarly stated in 1906 that 'The Christian people of this District are for the most part the poorest people ... They are poor agricultural labourers under Sudra masters'.³⁹ Nor did the missionaries themselves seem to have positively desired the change. A CMS missionary stated in 1883:

The great majority of our converts have remained at the work in which they were engaged previously, and it is most desirable that they should do so. It is idleness and pride, not labour, which is dishonouring.⁴⁰

Under these circumstances, some landlords even welcomed the conversion of their labourers. As early as in 1858, H. Andrew, a CMS missionary, wrote that 'The Christian slave has a high market value in the eyes of his heathen or Syrian master. His honesty and diligence make a great saving in a year. I have heard this from more than one master'.⁴¹ J. Knowles also expressed a similar view in 1885: 'In several instances heathen masters are encouraging their

³⁶Quilon, 1898, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

³⁷Neyoor Home Church, 1875, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

³⁸'Tiruwellu', *Proceedings of the CMS*, 1895-96, p. 277.

³⁹Pareychaley District, 1906, Box 8, TR, CWMA.

⁴⁰'The Pulayas of Travancore', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Apr. 1883, p. 222.

⁴¹H. Andrew, 'Cottayam District', *Madras Church Missionary Record*, Nov. 1858, p. 325.

labourers to become Christians as they say they are so much more trustworthy and industrious in consequence'.⁴² As will be seen later, one of the greatest fears of the high-caste Hindus and the state was that the lowest castes would reject their hereditary occupation, and the missionaries were certainly aware of this fear. Undoubtedly, it was much more advantageous for the missionaries to gain as many converts as possible and at the same time persuade them to remain at their work rather than lose the good relationship they enjoyed with the state and the landlords. In any case, the conversion of the lowest castes itself clearly did not have much effect on the Travancore government. In other words, as long as they remained obedient labourers, the state did not pay much attention to their conversion before the late nineteenth century.

Political Awakening of Various Communities

Political awakening, which largely emerged from the late nineteenth century among various communities, was one of the principal factors which forced the state to pay attention to the lower castes. The lower castes such as the Izhavas and the Pulayas became increasingly assertive, and the state became increasingly unable to ignore their demands.

The Izhavas' movements were some of the strongest and the most influential. The religious reform movement led by Sri Narayana Guru (c.1856–1928) gave identity and self-respect to this economically emerging community. Their association called Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP Yogam), which was established by Narayana Guru and other Izhava leaders in 1903, promoted integration of the caste and at the same time became a powerful political body which presented their demands to the government.⁴³ Similarly, the Syrian Christians became educationally and economically advanced and increasingly assertive. Their greatest concern was the virtual monopoly of government offices by high-caste Hindus. Their demands were frequently expressed in several newspapers established largely by Syrians around the 1880s.⁴⁴ For example, *Kerala Mitram*, a Cochin-based paper edited by a Jacobite Syrian, stated in 1882 that 'the fact that there are only

⁴²Quilon, 1885, TR, Box 8, CWMA.

⁴³Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 208–10.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 128–9.

twenty-five Syrians among 1424 public servants ... is a proof of the Sirkar's apathy towards this community'.⁴⁵ The Nayers also became politically active. The Malayali Sabha was founded in about 1884 largely with a view to encourage education; reform the matrilineal joint family system; and introduce land reform. It also played a leading role in the circulation of a petition called the Malayali Memorial which was submitted to the Maharaja in January 1891. In this memorial they tried to show the advantageous position of 'foreign Hindus' or non-Malayali Brahmins in the government service. They also founded the Nayar Service Society in 1914.⁴⁶

In addition, the Muslims in Travancore also became considerably assertive. The first Muslim newspaper in Travancore was published in 1905 by Vakkom M. Abdul Khader Moulvi, a Koranic scholar from Quilon. In 1915, a Muslim association, the Lejnathul Mohamadiya Sabha, was formed in Alleppey.⁴⁷ Muslims also frequently expressed their demands in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. In 1912, a Muslim member of the Assembly referred to their backwardness in education and demanded that (1) compulsory education be enforced among the Muslims as a first measure; (2) Arabic be taught to enable Muslim pupils to understand the Koran; (3) Muslim inspectors be appointed with a view to foster a desire among the Muslims for education, trade, agriculture and industry; and (4) poor Muslim students be exempted from the payment of fees.⁴⁸ The Travancore government clearly made considerable efforts to respond to these demands. As far as Arabic teaching was concerned, some schools in Muslim localities adopted it. In 1917 a nominated Member of the Assembly stated that 'Wherever Arabic Munshis [language teachers] had been attached to the elementary schools, they had attracted Muslim boys'.⁴⁹ In 1918, also at the Assembly, one Muslim member expressed 'the gratitude of the

⁴⁵*Kerala Mitram*, 1 Feb. 1882, NNR.

⁴⁶Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, pp. 166-9. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, p. 224.

⁴⁷James Lazer Chiriyankandath, 'Social Change and the Development of "Modern" Politics in Travancore: From the Late Nineteenth Century to 1938', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London (1985), p. 82.

⁴⁸SMPAP, 8th Session, 1912, p. 84.

⁴⁹SMPAP, 13th Session, 1917, p. 126.

Muslim community' for governmental efforts towards their education.⁵⁰

Thus, these main castes and communities became greatly politicized from the late nineteenth century, and their movements also influenced the lowest castes such as the Pulayas and the Parayas. The Pulayas' movement was largely led by Ayyan Kali (c.1863–1941) who was born to a Pulaya family in Venganoor near Trivandrum. In the late nineteenth century, he began to organize the Pulayas. His first attempt was to claim the right to use public roads. He and his followers forced their way into the roads from which they had been virtually excluded despite the government circular of 1884. The Pulayas gradually won this right, and Ayyan Kali's activities in the 1900s were mainly concentrated on the right to receive education. He appealed to the Pulayas around Venganoor, his birthplace, to refuse to work for the Nayar landlords until they permitted Pulaya children to enter the schools, and the 'strike' was successful.⁵¹

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the Educational Code of 1909–10 theoretically removed almost all restrictions regarding the admission of the lowest castes into government schools. Ayyan Kali tried to take full advantage of this new code and escorted a Pulaya girl to a school. However this caused a riot between the Nayars and the Pulayas which spread to many villages nearby. The Travancore government was seriously concerned about this riot and consequently came to pay more attention to the conditions of the lowest castes. A year after the riot, Ayyan Kali was nominated to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.⁵²

In 1905, Ayyan Kali founded a Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham (Association for the Welfare of the Poor) with the help of some Nayars. W.S. Hunt, a CMS missionary, had this to say with regard to the Sangham:

It [the association] teaches them that they have rights, and that, if they boldly claim them, those rights must be granted. Its claims do not stop short of absolute 'equality of opportunity' with other castes, *plus* certain privileges to make up for past and present disadvantages.⁵³

⁵⁰SMPAP, 14th Session, 1918, p. 53

⁵¹Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, pp. 265–9.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 269–70.

⁵³W.S. Hunt, 'The Uplifting of the Depressed', *Church Missionary Review*, Feb. 1914, p. 113.

One of the main activities of the Sangham was to organize meetings on 'some hill-side or maidan'. At these meetings, the leaders educated the audiences as to their rights and duties. They urged them to fulfil the duties of 'cleanliness, temperance, self-control, and the duty of sending their children to school'.⁵⁴

At first the Parayas and Christians from the lowest castes joined this Sangham. But they soon established separate associations of their own as they felt themselves 'neglected by the leaders of that Association'. The Parayas established a Brahma Pratyaksha Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham. One of the leaders was a man called Kandan Kumaran Parayan. They demanded that schools be established for their children and that they be employed in the lower grades of government service like the Pulayas. The low-caste Christians also started a separate association called the Christian Sadhu Jana Sangham which clearly had some connection with the CMS. It was established in June 1913 at the 'Diocesan Room' of the CMS in Kottayam. The purpose of the association was almost the same as that of the others. Some of the aims were 'to watch and further the poor Christians' interests, to represent their grievances to Government, and to improve their social position by education and other means'. Their leader, Saradan Solomon, was also nominated to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.⁵⁵

Thus it was largely from the 1900s that the movements of the lowest castes became increasingly active and widespread. With regard to the movements in 1914, W.S. Hunt had this to say:

This is really a very remarkable phenomenon and must seem especially striking to those who knew Travancore ten, or even five, years ago. The dumb millions have become vocal, the hitherto inert mass has become animate, the depressed are striving to shake off their depression. When the unrest was acute, six or seven years ago, we used to think that it was confined ... to the comparative few on top, and that the millions beneath knew and cared nothing for it all. But to-day, and in secluded Travancore, they do know and care and are themselves heaving in unrest.⁵⁶

Thus people in the lowest sections of society became widely politicized through religious and communal associations of various

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 114.

kinds. Their associations increased rapidly in number. In 1915, a member of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly stated that there were 126 associations of the Pulayas alone.⁵⁷ The Travancore government came to be seriously concerned with these movements. One of the most important duties of Sir P. Rajagopalachari (Dewan, 1907–14) was to deal with the movements.

The State and the Lowest Castes: Rajagopalachari's View

One of the principal reasons why the Travancore government began to pay attention to the lowest castes was to prevent conversion to Christianity. But this was not the sole reason. The state was also greatly concerned with the stability of the social and economic order which the lowest castes supported as agricultural labourers. The state desired that the lowest castes remain in their position and maintain the existing relationship with the higher castes. P. Rajagopalachari, a Dewan well known for his efforts to uplift the lower castes, stated to the Pulayas of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham in 1914 that:

you are employed very largely in the most important industry of the State, that of agriculture... while, of course, you should strive to better yourselves, you should also strive, as far as possible, to keep well with the other communities in the State.⁵⁸

On another occasion, he stated to the members of the same Sangham that:

You will have to continue to earn your livelihood hereafter, as you have been doing hitherto, and there is no way of earning an honest livelihood except by hard work. Do not relax your habits of hard work. Also continue to maintain your amicable relations with the higher castes who are mainly your employers.⁵⁹

He also advised the Parayas to 'take care not to come into collision with any of their employers'.⁶⁰ Thus, encouraging the lowest castes to

⁵⁷ *SMPAP*, 11th Session, 1915, pp. 117–18.

⁵⁸ *Addresses to the Dewan of Travancore* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1914).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ *Addresses to the Dewan*, p. 97.

be obedient agricultural labourers was evidently one of the greatest concerns of the Dewan.⁶¹

Migration by the lowest castes was one of the developments feared most by the landlords and the state. In 1916, a member of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly stated that 'The rate of wages [of the depressed classes] was very low and that led to the migration of workmen to other countries'.⁶² He then pointed out that '29 per cent of the arable land in the State was still left unregistered' and urged the government to register the land in the name of the 'depressed classes'.⁶³ There is little doubt that giving away a certain amount of land was one of the measures to prevent migration and other problems such as riots and strikes, and this policy seems to have been successful at least until 1931. The Census Report of 1931 stated that 'Most of them [the depressed classes] are field labourers dependent on others and are disinclined to leave their home and seek occupations in distant places'.⁶⁴

This was the reason the government paid attention not only to the low-caste Hindus but also to the Christian converts. It is true that Rajagopalachari preferred Hindu Pulayas to their Christian converts. In his address to the Hindu Pulayas, he stated that:

Your desire to reform yourselves and improve your status, without going out of the Hindu fold, naturally very much appeals to a Hindu like myself... I can find nothing in Hinduism, as I understand it, to justify the treatment now accorded by it to large communities like yours.⁶⁵

But he also declared that 'So far as the Government are concerned, we make no distinction between Christian and Hindu Pulayas'.⁶⁶ Indeed, as we have seen, Saradan Solomon, a low-caste Christian, was nominated to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, and various benefits including free primary education and scholarships were given to the Christians as well.

⁶¹ Keeping the lower castes obedient was also the great concern of the British in the Madras Presidency from the late nineteenth century onwards. Haruka Yanagisawa, *A Century of Change: Caste and Irrigated Lands in Tamilnadu, 1860s-1970s* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), pp. 221-2.

⁶² SMPAP, 12th Session, 1916, p. 119.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Census of India, 1931, Travancore*, part 1, p. 438.

⁶⁵ *Addresses to the Dewan*, p. 30.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Meanwhile, Rajagopalachari tried to control the lowest castes, Hindu or Christian, through their leaders. He first conciliated some leaders and then persuaded people to follow such leaders. His relationship with Ayyan Kali is an example of this strategy. Rajagopalachari nominated the Pulaya leader to the Popular Assembly in 1912 and maintained contact with him. Undoubtedly, various concessions from the government to the lowest castes, such as the assignment of land, were used to strengthen this relationship and the authority of the leaders over the lowest castes. To keep the lowest castes loyal through amenable leaders was thus one of his strategies. The Dewan told the Hindu Pulayas, while persuading them to follow Ayyan Kali, that:

It is vital, therefore, that you should ... choose your leaders carefully, and trust and follow them after you have chosen them. In Ayyan Kali you have a leader who is well worth following. I have known him for the last four years, both as a member of the Popular Assembly and otherwise. I have had long conversations with him regarding the difficult problems connected with your advancement, and I have come to the conclusion that he is a leader whom his community would do well to follow.⁶⁷

He repeated similar statements to the Parayas and the Christians and tried to persuade them to follow their leaders. On the other hand, the leaders of the lowest castes, particularly Ayyan Kali, undoubtedly tried to take advantage of the situation and used the government and some higher castes to achieve their own goals. Ayyan Kali seems to have maintained favourable relation with the Travancore government and was also closely associated with the activities of the Brahma Nishta Matam Chit Sabha founded in 1901 by a Hindu revivalist, Sadananda Swami, who was greatly concerned with the conversion of the lower castes to Christianity.⁶⁸

Rajagopalachari also regarded the missionaries as proper authorities to control the lowest classes and urged the low-caste Christians to 'obey the church authorities'.⁶⁹ There is no doubt that the missionaries were considered suitable for this purpose at the time. The Maharaja himself wrote to the CMS in 1917 that 'it is the example and teaching of their pastors that have made the Chris-

⁶⁷ *Addresses to the Dewan*, p. 30.

⁶⁸ K. Jayaprasad, *RSS and Hindu Nationalism: Inroads in a Leftist Stronghold* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1991), pp. 123–4; Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, p. 266.

⁶⁹ *Addresses to the Dewan*, p. 130.

tians a loyal and law-abiding community'.⁷⁰ As to the attitude of the missionaries, they seem to have become very obedient to the political authorities of the native states at that time. This was at least partly because the British, as we have seen in Chapter 2, became increasingly reluctant, from the late nineteenth century onwards, to intervene in social and religious customs and tried to distance themselves from the missionaries. The following statement of a missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church made in a missionary conference, in which the LMS and the CMS participated, represents the general opinion of the missionaries at the time. He stated in 1901 that:

Missionaries of experience and tact will remember that the rulers of native states are possessed of great authority in their own dominions, and should be treated with the greatest respect; and that any favour which is sought from them is more likely to be granted if they are applied to direct, than if an attempt is made to bring external pressure to bear upon them.⁷¹

Thus, the more reluctant the British authorities became to help the missionaries, the more they had to rely on Travancore State. In theory, the state could deport the missionaries. The Maharaja had power to permit missionaries to reside in his territory but not all the native states tolerated missionary activities.⁷² Moreover, as anti-missionary feelings grew especially among the high-caste Hindus who were inspired by Hindu revivalism and Indian nationalism, the missionaries had to rely on the state for the continuance of their activities as well as for their own safety. A disturbance that broke out in early 1908 would undoubtedly have convinced the missionaries of this necessity. The disturbance was caused by agitators who called for 'Swadeshi, or "Boycott" of all things foreign, and especially of Christianity as a foreign religion'.⁷³ During this agitation, a riot occurred in which 'some damage' was done to a police station. H.T. Wills, an LMS missionary, wrote that 'They [the rioters] had the chance to burn down our bungalows and destroy our work'. Although the Travancore government banned all open-air preaching for two months, the disturbance continued after the

⁷⁰*Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Record*, vol. 27, Nov. 1917.

⁷¹*Report of a Conference of the Foreign Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1901), p. 90.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³Report of 1908 & 1909, 31 Oct. 1909, H.T. Wills, TR, Box 9, CWMA.

two months had passed.⁷⁴ In a sense, this case suggests that the Travancore government could ban missionary activities if it felt that there was a proper reason, and that it was not totally impossible to find such a reason because there was a growing anti-missionary feeling. There can be no doubt that the missionaries needed to become more sensitive to the mood of the Travancore government at the time. In any case, the missionaries must have become much more amenable towards Travancore State in the early twentieth century than in the mid-nineteenth century, when they aggressively criticized existing social customs and government policies, emboldered by pressure from the Madras government. In return the state expected the missionaries to persuade the low-caste Christians to be obedient to the existing social, economic and political order.

Missionaries and the Caste System

The social and political awakening of the lowest castes, particularly in the 1900s and 1910s, influenced the policies of the missionaries towards the caste system in the church as well. The CMS had been more reluctant than the LMS to renounce the caste system in its own churches and therefore it faced greater protests from low-caste Christians.

The CMS missionaries began to establish contact with the Hindus in 1834. Earlier their activities had been concentrated on the Syrian Christians. It was not until 1851 that missionary work among the Pulayas was systematically commenced at the suggestion of Rev. T.G. Ragland, the Secretary of the CMS in Madras. During his travels through Travancore, 'he was much struck with the large number and wretched state of the Pulayas, and he at once suggested that something should be done'.⁷⁵ However, the missionaries did not greatly welcome the conversion of the lowest castes. Reverend J. Peet, a CMS missionary, wrote in 1860 that:

while I would not make them [the slaves] the prominent object of our labours, I would in an unobtrusive manner establish school-houses among them to instruct and Christianise them and, when baptised I would and do admit them to equal standing with myself and other Christian brethren; yet,

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵A.F. Painter, 'Christianity and Pulayas', *Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Gazette*, May 1882, p. 217.

under present circumstances, I would not meddle with their legal standing, or urge them to assume a position in Travancore society that has never been granted them.⁷⁶

This reluctant attitude was shared with other CMS missionaries and continued until at least the 1900s. In 1907, C.H. Gill, the Bishop of Travancore and Cochin, wrote that 'It is true that we have done but little except giving them some pastoral care and some lower primary education in small village schools. We have not done what has been done in other Missions'.⁷⁷ It is true that the CMS missionaries did try to admit a Pulaya Christian into the CMS College before 1892, but this attempt resulted in a 'commotion' and the student had to leave for British Malabar where caste feeling was 'less strong'. He was educated there by the Basel Mission and became an ordained minister.⁷⁸

The attitude of the missionaries was largely a result of their strategy of winning the high castes first in order to win over the entire population. They knew very well that admitting the lowest castes might be a grave obstacle in their aim. A.F. Painter, a CMS missionary, wrote in 1907 that 'many missionaries have felt that to seek and evangelize these [the outcastes] first would be to repel the higher castes and prevent them receiving the Gospel'.⁷⁹ This attitude of the CMS missionaries seem to have not changed until the converts from the lowest castes themselves came to demand more favourable treatment from the church authorities. It was then that the Hindu Pulayas led by Ayyan Kali demanded more favourable treatment from the higher castes and the state.

In 1906, two students who were Pulaya converts were admitted to the Cambridge Nicholson Institution, a CMS school for training teachers and catechists, and this eventually forced the missionaries to review their caste policies at least in part. Not surprisingly, the Syrian members of the CMS church strongly opposed their entrance. The Syrians objected to their sitting with Pulaya students in the Cathedral Church and also to their living and boarding at the

⁷⁶Hunt, *The Anglican Church*, vol. II, p. 111. Robin Jeffrey has also pointed out a similar view held by J. Peet. Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, p. 39.

⁷⁷Gill to Durrant, 1 Apr. 1907, Travancore and Cochin, Original Papers, CMSA.

⁷⁸Industrial School for Pulayans, 1892, Travancore and Cochin, File No. 136, CMSA.

⁷⁹A.F. Painter, 'The Call of the Indian Outcastes,' *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, June 1907, p. 347.

Institution. The Syrians also threatened to withdraw in a body if their children were sent to sit with the Pulaya Christians.⁸⁰

At first, the Syrians' demands were largely conceded to. It was decided that the two Pulaya students should work among their own people (Pulaya Christians) on Sundays, and a separate building was put up for them in the grounds of the Institution.⁸¹ But such discriminatory treatment was no longer readily accepted by the Pulaya Christians. The Bishop of Travancore and Cochin wrote in April 1907 that 'There is serious discontent and disaffection among these convert classes'.⁸² A Syrian member of the CMS also admitted that 'Many of the members of the depressed classes have begun to suspect, though not with good reason, that the older Christian community is deliberately standing in the way of their progress'.⁸³ Moreover, many converts left the CMS and joined other missions including the Salvation Army.⁸⁴ This discontentment, feelings of suspicion and the forsaking of the CMS were some of the principal factors that changed the attitude of the CMS missionaries. In 1909, C.H. Gill, the Bishop, stated with regard to the discrimination in the 'Pro-Cathedral' that 'it cannot be supported by the New Testament'.⁸⁵ Thus, from 1909, students from the lowest castes came to be permitted to sit in the cathedral, though the situation regarding the hostel seems to have remained the same. In 1914, a CMS missionary stated that students who were low-caste converts were still accommodated in separate buildings at least in the schools in Kottayam and Tiruwella.⁸⁶

Compared with the CMS, the LMS missionaries were more sympathetic towards converts from the lowest castes. At least officially, they denied caste distinctions in their churches. However, just as there was a grave division between the Syrian Christians and low-caste Christians in the CMS churches, the division between the Shanar Christians and Pulaya or Paraya Christians was

⁸⁰Copy of Memorandum by Rev. A.F. Painter, 30 Mar. 1908; T.C. Cherian to Bishop, 7 Mar. 1907, Original Papers, Travancore and Cochin, CMSA.

⁸¹Copy of Memorandum by A.F. Painter, CMSA.

⁸²Gill to Durrant, 1 Apr. 1907, Original Papers, Travancore and Cochin, CMSA.

⁸³Papers read at the Fourth Meeting, 31 Dec. 1909, Original Papers, Travancore and Cochin, CMSA.

⁸⁴Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, p. 135.

⁸⁵Bishop's Decision, *The Pulaya Question*, 1910, Original Papers, Travancore and Cochin, CMSA.

⁸⁶Painter, 'The Uplift', p. 115.

a serious problem in the LMS churches as well. Until the mid-nineteenth century, a great majority of the converts of the LMS were Shanars. In 1858, an LMS missionary in charge of Neyyur, for example, stated that 'The people are mostly from the Shanar caste... There are also a few adherents from the weaver, fisher, and slave castes'.⁸⁷ As the number of converts from the lowest castes increased, trouble occurred in the LMS churches as well, though the LMS missionaries seem to have been determined not to allow caste distinctions. In 1871, William Fletcher, an LMS missionary, wrote that:

Caste has given us much trouble. The old converts from the Shanar castes had not the least will to admit the Pariahs and Puliahs into their chapels but this year the Rev. J.E. Jones adopted various measures to remove this evil. Already it has been greatly remedied and there is no doubt that sooner or later it will altogether take its flight.⁸⁸

Samuel Mateer also stated with regard to his attitude towards caste distinctions:

In another case I found that a separate prayer house had actually been erected in the Mission compound at Veeranakavu for the use of Pariah converts who were refused admission into the chapel by Shanar and Iluver Christians and when I called the former into the original chapel which I had erected some years ago for Christian worship, the Shanar Christians jumped up and went out. I ordered the removal of the second building and declared that the remaining one was the recognised Mission Chapel open to all and every one who might choose to enter.⁸⁹

The attitude of the missionaries inevitably resulted in the defection of many Shanar Christians. In one congregation, most of the Shanar Christians left the mission when they were required to allow the Paraya Christians to worship in the same chapel with them.⁹⁰

In addition, unlike their CMS counterparts, the LMS missionaries paid attention to the social and economic conditions of their converts. As early as in 1872, Samuel Mateer stressed the importance of establishing schools, and encouraging and facilitating the 'legal acquisition of land' by the lowest castes. But, as in

⁸⁷Pareychaley, 1974, TR, Box 2, CWMA.

⁸⁸TDC Annual Report, 1871, p. 14.

⁸⁹TDC Annual Report, 1872, p. 9.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

the case of the CMS, the low-caste Christians of the LMS also began to demand more equal treatment from the missionaries from the later nineteenth century. In 1891 the Paraya Christians in south Travancore expressed their feelings of neglect and not being properly cared for by the LMS missionaries. In 1908 a similar statement was again made by the Paraya Christians.⁹¹

G.W. Gladstone has argued that the conversion movements of the lower castes in Kerala were a 'part of the struggle of the oppressed sections of the society for their emancipation'.⁹² However, it is difficult to accept that all cases of conversion can be treated as struggles for emancipation. As we have seen, the conversion of the lowest castes such as the Pulayas and Parayas began largely in the 1850s and 1860s. It is true that a large number of people of these castes converted to Christianity despite the fact that they sometimes had to endure 'persecution' from their 'masters' or employers. However, the converts themselves seem to not have organized any substantial movements after their conversion. Nor did they make any notable efforts to obtain fairer treatment from the higher castes and from the state. Also, at least partly as a result of this, their social or economic condition did not change substantially after their conversion. Almost all of them continued as agricultural labourers dependent on their 'masters'. Moreover, as we have just seen, the converts were largely confined within the caste system in their own church as well. It was not until the late nineteenth century that there was a social and political awakening among the converts of the lowest caste as well as their Hindu counterparts. In short, their conversion itself might have been a serious event but their attitude towards society, the state and religious authorities did not change after conversion. Therefore, it seems difficult to say that conversion was the result of a significant change within themselves or that their conversion represented a struggle for emancipation.

Why, then, did people convert? There are no clear explanations as to why a certain section of a certain caste converted to Christianity while others continued to follow the religion of their ancestors. G.A. Oddie has pointed out that conversion movements began among the more economically independent and then spread to the

⁹¹Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, p. 137-8.

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 2.

poorer sections in the case of the untouchable communities in the Telugu country. Duncan Forrester suggests that conversion movements become effective in times of social and economic dislocation including famine, and Dick Kooiman also states that crises, including famines and epidemics, promoted conversions. However, the above arguments do not answer the question adequately.⁹³ People converted without obvious 'social and economic dislocation', and extremely poor people also converted. In any case, as far as Travancore was concerned, the substantial social awakening or the movement for the social mobility of the Christians from the lowest castes did not begin until the late nineteenth century.

Upliftment of the Lower Castes

In order to partly prevent conversion to Christianity and partly to respond to the growing demands of the lowest castes, the Travancore government adopted several policies for the upliftment of these castes. They were carried out largely through education, assignment of land and co-operative movements. In the field of education, as we have seen in Chapter 3, the government made efforts from the 1890s. It started to establish schools for 'backward classes' in 1894-95; scholarships were given to some pupils of these castes; and four normal schools were opened to train people to teach them. In addition, most restrictions on the admission of the lowest castes to government schools were removed by the Education Code of 1910 and as a result the number of Pulaya and Paraya pupils increased sharply in the 1910s. By 1940 all schools, except for seventeen, were opened to all communities, and all special schools for the backward classes were abolished.⁹⁴

Land was assigned to the lowest castes for habitation and cultivation from the 1910s. In 1916-17 the Travancore government announced a plan to assign about 500 acres of land in Vilappil in the Neyyattinkara taluq to the Pulayas. The revised 'Puduval Rules'

⁹³G.A. Oddie, 'Christian Conversion in the Telugu Country, 1860-1900', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 7, 1, 1975, pp. 69-70; Duncan B. Forrester, 'The Depressed Classes and Conversion to Christianity, 1860-1960', in G.A. Oddie (ed.), *Religion in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1991), pp. 72-3; Dick Kooiman, 'Mass Movement, Famine and Epidemic', *Modern Asian Studies*, 25, 2, 1991, pp. 289-99.

⁹⁴Velu Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, pp. 735-8.

were issued in 1921.⁹⁵ In 1922, a total area of 15,280 acres was earmarked for assignment to the 'depressed classes',⁹⁶ and a certain portion of land was distributed annually from the earmarked land. In 1926-27, for example, 511 acres were assigned and by 1931, 4775 acres were distributed. Although it is not clear how much land was assigned to each family, 80.21 acres were assigned to 169 applicants in 1934-35. This means that a mere 0.47 acres were assigned to each family on an average and similarly, in the previous year, 0.69 acres were assigned.⁹⁷ Land outside the earmarked area was also distributed at concessional terms. In 1926-27, 1797 acres were thus assigned to the 'depressed classes'.⁹⁸ This measure seems to have had at least two advantages for the state. Firstly, it enabled the state to conciliate the lowest castes by giving them a certain amount of material assistance which helped ease discontent or tension among the lowest castes and prevent migration. Secondly, this measure was used to sustain the loyalty of the lowest castes towards their leaders and the state. The distribution was undoubtedly conducted through the recognized leaders of these castes. At the time of the first distribution, land was given to those Pulayas who were members of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham, which was established by Ayyan Kali. Hence distribution of land was one of the ways in which these leaders maintained their authority over their followers.

In addition to these measures, the Travancore government tried to use co-operative societies for the upliftment of the lower castes. In Travancore, the co-operative system was introduced in 1915 by Dewan Sir P. Rajagopalachari, who was also the first Registrar of Co-operative Societies in the Madras Presidency.⁹⁹ The purpose of the introduction of the co-operative system was 'the promotion of thrift and self-help among agriculturists, artisans and persons of limited means'. Their activities included giving encouragement to village industry, improving of sanitation and introducing 'compul-

⁹⁵ Census of India, 1931. Travancore, pp. 433-4. Puduval means 'newly cultivated land'.

⁹⁶ *Census of India, 1931, Travancore*, pp. 433-4. The Travancore government decided to use the term 'backward communities' instead of 'depressed classes' in 1936-37. *TAR*, 1936-37, p. 154.

⁹⁷ *TAR*, 1934-35, p. 47.

⁹⁸ *TAR*, 1926-27, p. 27.

⁹⁹ Pillai, *Manual*, vol. III, p. 673.

sory deposit schemes'. The Central Co-operative Bank was established in 1915 with a view to financing these societies.¹⁰⁰

One of the 'striking features' of this co-operative movement in Travancore was the existence of a great number of communal societies. In 1932-33, 715 out of 1786 societies were communal.¹⁰¹

Table 12: Communal Co-operative Societies in Travancore in 1932-33

| Community | No. of societies |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Nayars | 183 |
| Christians | 137 |
| Brahmins | 2 |
| Izhavas | 95 |
| Cheramars (Pulayas) | 102 |
| Sambavars (Parayas) | 25 |
| Arayas or Valas | 66 |
| Muslims | 12 |
| Others | 93 |
| Total | 715 |

Source: Report of the Co-operative Enquiry Committee, 1934, p.28. Arayas and Valas belonged to the 'depressed classes'.

As Table 12 indicates, many co-operative societies for the lowest castes were established. The first society for them was registered in 1916-17. It was organized mainly for the cultivation of *punja* lands¹⁰² which were taken on lease from the neighbouring landlords. For this purpose, a loan was taken from the Central Co-operative Bank to meet expenses for purchasing bulls, ploughs and other items.¹⁰³ However the societies for the 'depressed classes' were not very successful. In 1934, they were said to be in a 'dormant condition'. Although the reason for the failure was not clear, it was partly because the leaders of these societies were high-caste

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 76-7, 656, 673.

¹⁰¹*Report of the Co-operative Enquiry Committee*, 1934, p. 28.

¹⁰²*Punja* land is 'land lying submerged in water'.

¹⁰³*Report of the Co-operative Enquiry Committee*, p. 106.

Hindus, and therefore 'The societies became either a one man's show or money was misappropriated by cooking up the accounts'.¹⁰⁴

A Protector of the Depressed Classes was appointed in 1924.¹⁰⁵ At first, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies was entrusted with this post, but a full-time assistant in sole charge of the work was appointed in 1932. His work was, for example, inspecting lands registered for the 'depressed classes'; inspecting their co-operative societies; affording facilities for education; and exploring 'avenues for employment' for the educated members of these communities.¹⁰⁶ As for the introduction of a colony system for the lowest castes, the efforts of the Travancore government were delayed compared to those of the Cochin government, which started to create colonies as early as in 1919-20.¹⁰⁷ In Travancore, this system was introduced after the government received a proposal from the President of the Cochin-Travancore Board of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, most members of which were 'ardent Congressites and disciples of M.K. Gandhi'.¹⁰⁸ The President of the Board proposed that three co-operative societies be started in each taluq for providing the lowest castes with 'house sites, buildings, wells and employment during the season of unemployment'. In addition, he urged the government to assign them '25 cents of land in suitable areas or places not far from their work' and also to give them Rs 25 for building houses, Rs 50 for a well and Rs 25 for starting 'some industry such as kitchen gardening, weaving, poultry-farming or basket and mat-making'.¹⁰⁹ After considering this proposal, the Travancore government started to establish colonies for the 'depressed classes'. In 1935-36, land was acquired for three colonies and sanction was given to plans to create other colonies.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, as this case suggests, the Travancore government maintained a good relationship with the Gandhian association at the time, though the Travancore government and the Gandhians

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁵*Census of India, 1931, Travancore*, p. 434.

¹⁰⁶TAR, 1934-35, p. 157.

¹⁰⁷CAR, 1919-20, p. 56.

¹⁰⁸Confidential Files, No. 1092, Bundle 31, KSA.

¹⁰⁹*Report of the Co-operative Enquiry Committee, 1934*, p. 111.

¹¹⁰TAR, 1935-36, p. 149.

were sometimes in confrontation, for instance over the Vaikkam Satyagraha of 1924–1925 and the issue of entry into temples. In 1936–37, the government gave Rs 1500 to the Kerala Provincial Board of the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh for the distribution of textbooks among the pupils of 'backward communities' and another donation of Rs 1200 to them for 'general ameliorative work' among these communities.¹¹¹ This was partly because the government considered the activities of the Sangh useful preventing conversions and also because the Indian National Congress did not have much influence in Travancore until 1938, when the Travancore State Congress was founded and the government began to attack its politicians.¹¹²

Abolition of Tindal and Vaikkam Satyagraha

As we have seen, many caste disabilities had been abolished by the 1910s. Most public places were opened to the lower castes including the Pulayas and the Parayas. Under these circumstances, the lower castes, especially the Izhavas, began to agitate for the total abolition of tindal or caste pollution, by demanding the right to temple entry. In 1920, Kunju Panikkar, a nominated member of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and an agriculturist, stated that 'theendal had disappeared from public roads, courts, cutcherries [government offices], schools and other public places. It was high time that it was rooted out from temples also'.¹¹³ Similar demands for temple-entry began to be expressed in the late 1910s. C. Raman Thampi, a retired high court judge, referred to this idea in 1917.¹¹⁴ T.K. Madhavan, an Izhava leader, also wrote about the question of temple-entry in December 1917, and this issue was discussed at a meeting of the SNDP Yogam.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹TAR, 1936–37, p. 155.

¹¹²Robin Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label—"Congress" in Travancore Politics, 1938–48', in D.A. Low (ed.), *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917–47* (London: Heinemann, 1977), pp. 448–9.

¹¹³SMPAP, 16th Session, 1920, p. 107.

¹¹⁴T.K. Ravindran, *Vaikkam Satyagraha and Gandhi* (Trichur: Sri Narayana Institute of Social and Cultural Development, 1975), p. 47.

¹¹⁵Robin Jeffrey, 'Travancore: Status, Class and the Growth of Radical Politics, 1860–1940', Robin Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 149–50.

The demand was also frequently expressed at the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.

The Travancore government clearly did not want to deal with this matter. Replying to T.K. Madhavan, M. Krishnan Nair (Dewan, 1914-20) stated in 1919:

This relates to religion and Government cannot well interfere. Suppose Government publish a notification declaring the abolition of theendal from tomorrow, do you think that it could be enforced? Is it practicable? ... I do not mean to say that theendal should exist for all time. It might stop in course of time as the result of the spread of education. Things are not now what they were 50 years ago ... But, do you think that one man, or even a Government for that matter, will succeed in bringing about the change desired by you?¹¹⁶

Similarly, the next Dewan, T. Raghaviah, declared in 1921 that he 'would not allow the matter to be discussed' in the Popular Assembly. However, the demand from the Izhavas and others was very vociferous and persistent. Forty-six members of the Assembly signed a memorial in 1922 demanding that the devaswoms, or religious institutions, should be utilized 'for the common good of all Hindus'.¹¹⁷ The government had to deal with this matter at the Assembly of 1922 as well, though it was determined not to open the temples to the lower castes.

The Vaikkam Satyagraha started in 1924 under these circumstances. It was realized that 'Satyagraha was the only possible course to be adopted for the removal of the gross injustice'.¹¹⁸ One of the leaders was T.K. Madhavan, an Izhava editor, who was supported by some Nayers and the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi. The immediate purpose of the Satyagraha was to demand the opening of the roads near the Vaikkam temple in north Travancore to all castes. The Satyagraha was started on 30 March 1924 and ended on 23 November 1925. On the first day, a batch of three men consisting of a Pulaya, an Izhava and a Nayar entered the prohibited area and were arrested by the police. The next day again two Izhavas and a Nayar made a similar attempt.¹¹⁹ Many

¹¹⁶SMPAP, 15th Session, 1919, p. 87.

¹¹⁷Ravindran, *Vaikkam Satyagraha*, p. 49.

¹¹⁸Menon, *History of Freedom Struggle*, p. 117.

¹¹⁹Cotton to Ch. Sec., 10 Apr. 1924, File No. 77 pd/1924, Foreign and Political, NAI; Jeffrey, 'Travancore', in Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, pp. 150-1.

people from the higher castes supported the Satyagraha. Mannath Padmanabhan of the Nayar Service Society collected 2000 signatures and led a 'Savarna Jatha' from Vaikkam to Trivandrum on foot.¹²⁰

The attitude of the Travancore government towards the Satyagraha was to 'maintain the *status quo ante*', and therefore the demands of the satyagrahis were rejected. But the government was not completely resolute. T. Raghaviah showed some degree of sympathy with the Izhavas by stating that 'this feeling [self-respect] deserved to be respected', though he emphasized that the problem would be solved only by 'methods of peaceful persuasion and the education of the caste communities to a realization of the fact that the custom of untouchability is as degrading to the latter [caste Hindus] as it is unjust to the former [non-caste Hindus]'.¹²¹ He stated that he recognized the 'legal right' of the higher castes to maintain the prohibition, but he simultaneously demanded that the higher castes should not 'insist too strongly on their legal rights' but should recognize the 'time spirit'.¹²²

There is no doubt that it was crucial for the Travancore government to maintain 'communal harmony', avoid an intensification of 'class hatred', and not endanger 'public peace'. A riot which occurred in Salem District in the Madras Presidency some months earlier was of great concern to the Travancore government, and the Dewan himself referred to it. In Salem, some public streets inhabited by caste Hindus were thrown open to all castes; this caused a riot in which people were injured and killed.¹²³ Also, the Mappila rebellion which broke out in British Malabar in 1921-22 undoubtedly represented what the Travancore government most feared. To suppress this rebellion, the British used almost two brigades of infantry and 700 special police which had to deal with about 10,000 rebels. As a result of this rebellion, casualties totalled 169 on the

¹²⁰Gopalan, *Kerala: Past and Present* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1959), p. 40. As is well known, this Satyagraha was important to M.K. Gandhi and the Congress. It was an attempt 'along strict Gandhian lines' in order to 'involve large numbers of people as well as subsume caste movements into a more general Hindu identity'. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 229; Dilip Menon, *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India: Malabar 1900-1948* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 81.

¹²¹SMPAP, 21st Session, 1925, p. 27.

¹²²SMPAP, 1925, pp. 27-8.

¹²³*Ibid.*, pp. 26-8.

government side, whilst about 4000 rebels were killed or wounded. In addition, 486 murders, 5941 dacoities and 352 cases of arson were reported.¹²⁴ Thus, though the Dewan rejected the demands of the Izhavas and others, he, at the same time, tried to persuade the higher castes to recognize the spirit of the times. Consequently, an agreement was reached between Gandhi and the Travancore government by which all roads were opened except for a short distance near the entrance to the temple.¹²⁵

After the Satyagraha, demands for the abolition of tinal continued to be expressed. In 1927, T.K. Madhavan became General-Secretary of the SNDP Yogam and promoted Vaikkam-style satyagrahas in other towns in Travancore.¹²⁶ The Izhavas and other communities came to be involved in politics more intensely after this. The formation of the Joint Political Congress in 1933 largely by the Izhavas, Christians and Muslims is one example.¹²⁷ Moreover, between 1928 and 1930, trade union organizations were formed in Alleppey and in Calicut and Cannanore in British Malabar.¹²⁸ This was undoubtedly one of the events which made the government acutely aware of class divisions as well.

In the meantime, the Syrian Christians continued to advance economically and came to demand political influence proportionate to their wealth and numerical strength. They demanded the opening of all branches of the government service first and a proper share in the legislature later. The formation of the League for Equal Civic Rights in 1918 and that of the Joint Political Congress in 1933 were some of their most important political activities. In addition, conversion to Christianity continued despite the efforts of the government and higher castes. Each census made them aware of this fact. Moreover, the Izhavas, who were numerous and economically advanced, gradually came to show a greater interest in leaving the fold of Hinduism. These trends threatened to undermine the basis of the 'Hindu State' and the privileges of the higher castes. It became more and more crucial for the government to prevent fur-

¹²⁴Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1987), pp. 169-70.

¹²⁵Gopalan, *Kerala: Past and Present*, p. 40; Menon, *History of Freedom Struggle*, p. 134.

¹²⁶Jeffrey, 'Travancore', p. 157.

¹²⁷Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label', p. 443.

¹²⁸Gopalan, *Kerala: Past and Present*, p. 47.

ther conversions and to keep the lower castes, especially the Izhavas, loyal to the state. The Travancore government thus adopted anti-missionary policies and, at the same time, conceded the right to the lower castes to enter government temples.

Anti-missionary Policies and the Temple Entry Proclamation

In the 1930s the relationship between the missionaries and the Travancore government became considerably worse again. In this period, anti-Christian feelings were widespread in Travancore, and efforts were made to prevent conversion from Hinduism both by the government as well as by non-governmental bodies. G.A. Garstin, the AGG, wrote in April 1935 that 'during the last two or three years a change of policy on the part of the Travancore government has occurred which, it is felt, is inspired by a dislike of the rapid growth and spread of Christianity in Travancore State and a determination to check it'.¹²⁹

Perhaps the greatest cause for this spread of anti-Christian feelings was the growing influence of M.K. Gandhi and the nationalist movement led by him. The Salt Satyagraha of 1930 and the Civil Disobedience Movement affected Travancore considerably. In some towns such as Alleppey and Quilon, public meetings were held; foreign cloth shops were picketed, and the wearing of khaddar [hand-woven cloth] was promoted.¹³⁰ As for this growing trend in Travancore, G.W. Trowell, an LMS missionary, reported in January 1932 that 'A growth in national feeling has been very evident in the last 18 months' and that 'A very large proportion of Hindu students wear khaddar habitually'.¹³¹ Another LMS missionary referred to Gandhi's efforts to 'receive back' untouchables and stated that this movement was 'a Nation-wide effort to resist Christian propaganda'.¹³²

Under these circumstances, the publication of the Census Report of 1931 aroused great public concern. The Census Report for the first time revealed the number of converts in each caste. As Table

¹²⁹The Travancore Government and Missions in Travancore State, W.A. Garstin, File No. 454-p (s)/36, Foreign and Political, NAI.

¹³⁰Louise Ouwerkerk, *No Elephant for the Maharaja: Social and Political Change in Travancore, 1921-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994), p. 117.

¹³¹Nagercoil, 1931, G.W. Trowell, dated 27 Jan. 1932, TR, Box 11, CWMA.

¹³²Attingal District, 1932, TR, Box 11, CWMA

Table 13: Christian Converts among Lower Castes, 1931

| Caste | Hindu | Christian | Total | Percentage of Christians |
|--------|---------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|
| Nadar | 233,982 | 168,573 | 402,555 | 41.9% |
| Pulaya | 207,337 | 157,813 | 365,150 | 43.2% |
| Paraya | 70,684 | 71,680 | 142,364 | 50.3% |
| Kurava | 87,071 | 8,158 | 95,229 | 8.6% |
| Izhava | 869,863 | 2,311 | 872,174 | 0.3% |

Source: Census of India, 1931, vol.28, Travancore, part I, Report (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1932), pp.382-5, 389.

13 shows, about half of the Nadars, Pulayas and Parayas converted to Christianity.

The Report described the growth of Christianity in Travancore as 'remarkable', and estimated that the number of converts from 'the Depressed Classes' was 70,000 in the previous decade.¹³³ E.A.L. Moore, the CMS Bishop in Travancore and Cochin, stated that 'The publication of the recent Census Report ... has certainly disturbed the minds of the Nairs, the chief Hindu community in this State. As the government is largely under Nair influence, this has brought about a change in the attitude of the Government to Christians'.¹³⁴

The conversion movement among the Izhavas was another cause of anti-missionary policies. Although there were some discussions among the Izhavas regarding the change of religion in the 1920s, it was in the 1930s that their conversion drew the attention of the government as well as the missionaries and other religionists. The communal feelings of the Izhavas which had been gradually growing were expressed strongly in 'the abstention movement' in 1932 and 1933,¹³⁵ and they were further heightened by the imprisonment

¹³³Census of India 1931, Travancore, part I, pp. 337, 341.

¹³⁴Moore to Sir Cusack Walton, CMS House, 13 Oct. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹³⁵This was a movement conducted by Izhavas, Christians and Muslims against the constitutional reform of 1932. They protested the reform by abstaining from voting or from accepting nominations to the legislative bodies. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity*, pp. 350-2.

of their leader C. Kesavan, who was sentenced to two years' simple imprisonment for sedition in 1935. C. Kunjuraman, Kesavan's father-in-law, then took a leading part in the movement to leave Hinduism.¹³⁶

Added to this, B.R. Ambedkar's appeal for conversion undoubtedly had a considerable influence on the Izhava's movement. In September 1935, Ambedkar declared at Yeoli in western India that he would leave Hinduism, and 'the whole India' was agitated by the declaration.¹³⁷ Then, some months later, in the beginning of 1936, the Izhavas made public their intention to abandon Hinduism.¹³⁸ In June 1936, the Police Commissioner reported that agitation for the renunciation of Hinduism was one of the main activities of the SNDP Yogam, the Izhavas' principal organization.¹³⁹

The missionaries did not fail to make good use of this situation. On 5 June 1936, the Police Commissioner reported with regard to the CMS's activities:

Dr Moore, Bishop of Travancore and Cochin, considers the present conversion movement among the Ezhavas as a wonderful opportunity to do his bit for the Christian world ... For the conversion of Ezhavas into Christianity, a central committee under the Board of Missions has been formed ... Two special sub-committees of the central committee have also been appointed ... It is recommended by Dr Moore that all Ezhava houses should be visited by the workers.¹⁴⁰

In addition to the Christian missionaries, a number of preachers of different religions, such as Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists, came to Travancore to work among the Izhavas, believing them to be ripe for conversion.

Under these circumstances, enthusiastic efforts were made by 'various anti-Christian agencies' to stop the conversion of non-Christians.¹⁴¹ Among these bodies, the Kerala Hindu Mission was undoubtedly the most influential in the 1930s. Its President was

¹³⁶'Hinduism and Ezhavas', Garstin to Pol. Sec., 2 May 1936, 245-P(s)/36, Foreign and Political Proceedings, NAI.

¹³⁷'Open Letter', V.S. Dornakal, 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹³⁸'The Travancore Ezhava Situation', V.S. Dornakal, Sep. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹³⁹Commissioner of Police to Ch. Sec., 5, July 1936, Confidential Files, Bundle 31, File 1092, KSA.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁴¹Momorandum from MR/ C.P. Bhanu, 6 Feb. 1935, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

V.S. Subramanya Aiyar, retired Dewan (Dewan, 1929–32), and other influential men including P.K. Narayana Pillai, High Court Judge and a Malayalam scholar, and P.K. Krishna Pillai, retired Dewan Peishkar.¹⁴² R.C. Das, Secretary of the Arya Samaj in Travancore was also one of the secretaries of the Hindu Mission.¹⁴³ Supported by grants from the Travancore government, they organized 'Reading Rooms, Book Depots, Gita classes, Sunday Schools, social service, and Health-Bureaus'. 'Travelling preachers and sadhus' were also appointed in different villages, especially where there were 'small backward churches',¹⁴⁴ and distributing Malayalam booklets was one of their activities. One booklet, which was entitled 'The Missionaries must go', quoted figures showing the growth of Christianity and stated that 'At this rate Hinduism will be wiped out soon, and our national life will be in danger'.¹⁴⁵ Also, the Harijan Sevak Sangh was formed in Trivandrum in 1933, which was financially supported by the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Travancore government as we have seen. It did active propaganda work for 'temple entry to the Harijans and for the removal of their other disabilities'.¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the Travancore government adopted a number of policies which were antagonistic to the Christians in the 1930s. In November 1932, the government passed an order that the buildings of aided schools could not be used as places of public worship without the permission of the Education Department. One year later, a similar order was passed to forbid the use of places of public worship as school classes.¹⁴⁷ These orders, however, were not strictly enforced, and therefore the missionaries received 'a rude shock' when the amendment to the Educational Code was issued.¹⁴⁸ This amendment was published on 13 June 1936. It stated that:

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³Commissioner of Police to Ch. Sec., 5 July 1936, Confidential Files, Bundle 31, File 1092, KSA.

¹⁴⁴Memorandum from Mr C.P. Bhanu, 6 Feb. 1935, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹⁴⁵G.E. Phillips, 'Stirring Days in Travancore', *The Chronicle of the LMS*, July 1936, p. 153

¹⁴⁶Commissioner of Police to Ch. Sec., 5 July 1936, Confidential Files, Bundle 31, File 1092, KSA.

¹⁴⁷Order ROC 3574, 23 Nov. 1936, *TGG*, 24 Nov. 1936, p. 320.

¹⁴⁸The Travancore Government and Missions in Travancore State, II, W.A. Garstin, 19 Oct. 1936, FPP, 454-P(s)/36, NAI.

the managements of schools now held in churches or places of public worship should before the end of the school year 1938–39 remove the schools to separate buildings approved by the department, failing which the grants, if any, and the recognition of such schools will be withdrawn.¹⁴⁹

In addition, the Travancore government adopted a policy which curtailed free preaching in public. The Commissioner of Police issued an order on 22 July 1936 which stated that 'In the interest of the peace of the country, offensive conduct on the part of any religionist has to be deeply lamented and promptly taken notice of by the District officers concerned by the adoption of preventive measures prescribed by law'.¹⁵⁰ Unlike the other order regarding schools and places of worship issued in 1930s, this order was enforced with a great deal of strictness. The Travancore government issued orders restricting some Muslim propagandists 'from making any public speeches for some weeks'. Similar orders were issued to Kunjuraman, an Izhava leader and editor of a daily paper, who declared his intention to become a Christian. Chako Sastri, an evangelist of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, was also barred from any form of public speaking.¹⁵¹

Meanwhile, the missionaries were very careful in petitioning the British authorities in order not to stimulate anti-British or anti-missionary feelings among the public as well as in the state. G.H. Marsden, an LMS missionary, wrote on 3 September 1935 regarding the cancellation of government grants that:

opinion here is very strongly against any appeal to the Paramount Power, except in a matter of fundamental and vital importance. Such an appeal in Travancore is very rarely made; and would put us and all our folk, in every department of life, into grave disfavour, both with the Government and with the rest of the population.¹⁵²

He then mentioned that the 'whole section of the population of Roman Catholics' was regarded with 'considerable odium' by other sections when some of them appealed to the British Resident.¹⁵³ Hence the missionaries were extremely careful about requesting the British authorities to intervene on their behalf. On 13 October 1936, E.A.L.

¹⁴⁹Order ROC 3574, 23 Nov. 1936, *TGG*, 24 Nov. 1936, p. 320.

¹⁵⁰Commissioner of Police, 22 July 1936, enclosed in FPP, 454-P(s)/36, NAI.

¹⁵¹P.O. Philip to Rev. W. Paton, 21 Aug. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹⁵²Marsden to G.E. Phillips, 3 Sep. 1935, TL Box 33, CWMA.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

Moore, a CMS missionary, stated that 'I think then that the time has not yet come for us to make any representations to the India Office'.¹⁵⁴ It is true that W.A. Garstin (AGG, 1935-36) apparently sympathized with the missionaries. He addressed a number of reports on the religious policy of Travancore to the Government of India, and in one of them he stated that the 'spirit of religious tolerance and religious liberty seems now to be in jeopardy'.¹⁵⁵ But he also fully recognized that imprudent British intervention would make things worse.

Apart from the issue of temple-entry, the Izhavas and other lower castes were still subjected to many caste disabilities. A government official described such disabilities in 1936 in these words:

More than forty roads mostly approaches to and surrounding temples ... are open to Christians and Muhamadans but not to non-caste Hindus. Regarding tanks, wells, Satroms [rest houses] there are none used by non-Hindus but which are not used by non-caste Hindus as well. There are however 21 satrams reserved for caste Hindus exclusively. There are ten schools all Departmental which are not accessible to all classes.¹⁵⁶

Seemingly, in order to cope with the Izhava movement for conversion, the Travancore government issued an order by which 'all public places and rest-houses maintained by the State are open to Izhavas and other depressed classes'.¹⁵⁷ This was published on 26 May 1936 as a result of strong pressure from the Maharaja himself, who was at that time on a tour of Simla.¹⁵⁸ The government also decided to give eight seats to the Izhavas in the Travancore Legislative Assembly.¹⁵⁹ Further, in about September 1936, there was a rumour about a temple entry proclamation which it was said would be issued on the Maharaja's

¹⁵⁴ Moore to Sir Cusack Walton, CMS House, 13 Oct. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹⁵⁵ The Travancore and Missions in Travancore State, W.A. Garstin, File No. 454-p(s)/36, FPP, NAI.

¹⁵⁶ Ch. Sec. to Private Sec. to Maharajah, 20 May 1936, Confidential Files, Bundle 38, File 1365, KSA.

¹⁵⁷ Philip to Paton, 21 Aug. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

¹⁵⁸ There was strong opposition within the government to this measure. Therefore, the Maharaja had to repeat his order by telegram to the Chief Secretary. Ch. Sec. to Private Sec. to Maharajah, 24 May 1936, Ch. Sec. to Private Sec., 24 May 1936, Confidential Files, Bundle 38, File 1365, KSA.

¹⁵⁹ 'The Travancore Ezhava Situation', V.S. Dornakal, Sep. 1936, India Odds Box 6, CWMA.

birthday.¹⁶⁰ These government policies made 'many Ezhava leaders hesitate to put into effect the change-of-religion move on which they were with one accord keen about six months ago'.¹⁶¹

The Temple Entry Proclamation was actually issued on 12 November 1936, the Maharaja's birthday. By this proclamation, the temples controlled by the state were thrown open to Hindus of all castes. Although this proclamation was valid for only government temples, some private temples were also thrown open after the proclamation. In 1937 'Valia Raja of Edappally' decided to open all his temples to all Hindus and requested the government to publish his decision.¹⁶²

After the proclamation, the Travancore government continued to make considerable efforts to prevent conversion, although it relaxed the rules regarding the prohibition of the establishment of schools in religious institutions. It announced eleven days after the proclamation that existing schools were exempt from these rules. In September 1937, however, the Travancore government ordered, with regard to fee concessions in secondary schools, that 'Hindu depressed people should continue to get full fee concession, but 85 per cent of the Christian converts from these people must pay full fees, and 15 per cent may get half-fee concession'.¹⁶³ As a result, according to a CMS missionary, 'a few hundred children throughout the state' had changed their names to Hindu ones by April 1938.¹⁶⁴ G.W. Trowell, an LMS missionary, explained the situation thus: 'Christian parents, anxious to give a son a chance of High School education leading to a better life than the traditional depressed class occupations, can only do—because of their poverty—if they became Hindus.'¹⁶⁵

Moreover, the government continued to give a 'generous grant' to the Kerala Hindu Mission, which actively worked among the lowest castes and Christians from these castes.¹⁶⁶ E.A. Pidcock, an LMS missionary, wrote in his report for 1938 that 'The Hindu

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

¹⁶²Valia Raja to Ch. Sec., 17 Aug. 1937, Confidential Files No. 1499, Bundle 35, KSA.

¹⁶³Nagercoil, 1937, G.W. Trowell, Box 12, TR, CWMA.

¹⁶⁴Smith to Walton, 1 Apr. 1938, Travancore and Cochin, G2I5/d, CMSA.

¹⁶⁵Nagercoil, 1937, G.W. Trowell, Box 12, TR, CWMA.

¹⁶⁶*Travancore Directory*, 1938, p. 685.

Mission is very active all over Travancore State ... and offers all kinds of material advantages to the people'.¹⁶⁷ In fact, it had as many as 118 centres throughout Travancore in 1938. Some of their activities included holding meetings explaining the significance of the Temple Entry Proclamation; arranging religious lectures, giving books, noon-day meals and scholarships to 'poor students'; and conducting night schools.¹⁶⁸ They also conducted a re-conversion ceremony and gave a certificate of re-conversion.¹⁶⁹

There is no doubt that the Temple Entry Proclamation and the subsequent efforts of the government and the Hindu Mission were highly successful. The Census Report of 1941 stated that 'It [the Proclamation] arrested the forces of disintegration in Hindu society and must have had its effect both in deducing the number of converts to other religions and in encouraging several of those who had already left Hinduism to come back to the fold'.¹⁷⁰

Conclusion

Some of the principal matters with which Travancore State was concerned regarding the lower castes were how to maintain the privileges of the higher castes in the government as well as the existing social and economic order which the lower castes supported at the bottom mainly as agricultural labourers. As long as these matters were not jeopardized, the state did not pay much attention to the lower castes and their conversion to Christianity. The government issued a number of orders to relax caste restrictions in the nineteenth century but this was largely the result of pressures from the Madras government and the missionaries. Most of the lowest castes still remained agricultural labourers after their conversion, and the state had little reason to worry about the conversion.

From the late nineteenth century, however, the state paid more attention to the conditions of the lower castes. Confronted with the growing politicization of Syrian Christians and with Hindu revivalism, the state gradually realized the importance of stopping further conversions so as to prevent the influence of Christians

¹⁶⁷ Attingal, 1938, E.A. Pidcock, Box 12, TR, CWMA.

¹⁶⁸ *Travancore Directory*, 1938, p. 685.

¹⁶⁹ Nagercoil, 1937, G.W. Trowell, Box 12, TR, CWMA.

¹⁷⁰ *Census of India, 1941*, vol. xxv, *Travancore*, part 1. *Report* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1942), p. 129.

from growing further and to respond to the growing religious identity of the Hindus. It thus adopted a number of anti-missionary policies as well as measures for the upliftment of the lower castes. However, the prevention of conversion was not the sole reason for these policies. The maintenance of the social and economic order or, in other words, keeping the lowest castes, including the Christian converts, loyal to the landlord as well as to the state became increasingly crucial, as they began to demand more equal treatment. Accordingly, the conciliation of the lower castes, Hindu or Christian, was also one of the principal concerns of the state in the 1910s. For this purpose the state, in a sense, made use of the missionaries. The missionaries, especially those of the CMS, had become very conservative in their attitude towards the social, economic and political order, and the state expected the missionaries to persuade the converts to remain obedient to the existing order. It was partly for this reason that the state and the missionaries maintained a relatively favourable relationship during the 1910s and 1920s.

However, the situation changed greatly in the 1930s. In Travancore there was a marked increase in the influence of the nationalist movement led by Gandhi, and conversion to Christianity still continued. The Izhavas came to show their interest in mass conversion. Under these circumstances, the government adopted an anti-missionary policy. However, it was almost impossible for the missionaries at this stage to expect any substantial support from the British authorities and they had almost no choice but to accept these policies.

Chapter 6

Cochin: Different Developments in a Similar State

Introduction

Cochin was a small state to the north of Travancore. In 1911 it had an area of about 1418 square miles and a population of 918,110. Roughly speaking, the area was one fifth and the population was one fourth that of Travancore. Although small in area and population, Cochin was a similar state to Travancore in many respects. Both were native states ruled by Hindu rulers and supervised by the same British Resident. The social structure of the states was also broadly similar. As Table 14 shows, the composition of major castes and communities did not differ greatly, though it might be noticed that the percentage of Brahmins in Cochin was considerably higher than in Travancore.

The states were also similar in terms of social customs. The Nayers and other castes adopted a system of matrilineal inheritance called *marumakkattayam*; the caste system was notoriously rigid compared to other parts of India; and the lowest castes such as the Pulayas were slaves until 1854 when they were legally emancipated. The remarkably high literacy rate which both states attained was also an important similarity. It is largely due to these similarities that adequate scholarly attention has not been paid to this native state—with a few exceptions.¹

However, it is also true that there were many differences between the states. For example, the Cochin government was generally slow to introduce administrative reforms in many areas; it also seems to have been more prone to nepotism and corruption. It was

¹M.J. Koshy has dealt with the politics of the Cochin state in his *Constitutionalism in Travancore and Cochin* (Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society, 1972). As to the history of Jews in Cochin, J.B. Segal has published *A History of the Jews of Cochin* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993).

Table 14: Major Castes and Communities in Travancore and Cochin, 1911

| Caste and community | Percentage to the total population | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| | Cochin (%) | Travancore (%) |
| Brahmins | 3.9 | 1.6 |
| Nayars | 13.2 | 17.3 |
| Izhavas | 22.7 | 15.9 |
| Pulayas | 7.9 | 5.4 |
| Christians | 25.4 | 26.4 |
| Muslims | 7.0 | 6.6 |
| Others | 19.0 | 24.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Census of India, 1911, vol.XVIII, Cochin, part I, Report (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1912), p.73; Census of India, 1911, vol.XXIII, Travancore, part I, Report (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1912), p.256.

largely for these reasons that the British were more likely to intervene in the domestic affairs of Cochin. As for the religious aspect, very few Hindus converted to Christianity in Cochin in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These differences influenced the development of education and medicine as well as policies towards the lower castes. This chapter investigates the causes and consequences of the differences between Travancore and Cochin and examines the nature of and changes in this other native state.

Corruption and British Intervention

At least until the late 1880s, Cochin was not a very problematic state for the Madras government and intervention by the British Resident seems to have been rare. The financial position of the Cochin government did not present a serious problem, and the Madras government often expressed its satisfaction. In 1873 it stated that 'the financial condition of the State continues sound, and is satisfactory'.² Administrative reforms in the state advanced more or less as was ex-

²G.O. No. 467, 3 Dec. 1873, MPP, OIOC.

pected. In 1878, the Governor of Madras congratulated the Raja of Cochin on 'continued progress' during the year.³ Cochin was largely free from disturbances and other forms of social and political conflict or at least this matter was not paid much attention to by the British. A disturbance that occurred at Trichur in April 1880 was certainly an exception.

This disturbance was caused by two rival factions of Nayers during a festival called Poorum or 'the annual pagoda feast'. The Nayers were villagers divided into 'the partisans of the Tirunampady and the Paramakavoo Temples'. The disturbance was started by people armed with clubs and stones on the night of the festival and ended within 'an hour, or about that time' with the intervention of British troops stationed there. The Madras government paid great attention to the disturbance not because it was a serious one, but because the Tahsildar of Trichur had called upon British troops for help. The Madras government criticized the Cochin government, remarking that 'the duty of maintaining internal order in the State rests on the Sirkar and its Police, and not on British troops'.⁴ The inadequacy of the Cochin police was a serious concern for the Madras government. Under pressure from Madras, the Cochin government reorganized its police force in 1884. Until that time the tahsildars (local administrative officers) performed the functions of the police as well as the magistracy with the the help of their peons.⁵ In 1882–83, a police training school was established and a police officer from the Madras government was placed in charge of it. He was assisted by constables also from the Madras service.⁶ Then, in 1884 a separate police department was organized. In 1885–86, the department had a total of about 350 men, including one Superintendent, seven Inspectors and 46 Head Constables. As in other departments, the Nayers were predominant, and comprised over 70 per cent of the personnel.⁷

³G.O. No. 431, 13 Aug. 1878, MPP, OIOC.

⁴Macgregor to Ch. Sec., 22 May 1880; T. Govinda Menon to Resident, 19 May 1880; Dewan Peshcar to Dewan, 18 May 1880; G.O. No. 254, 7 Jun. 1880, MPP, OIOC.

⁵C. Achyuta Menon, *Cochin State Manual* (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1911). p. 354; CAR, 1880–81, p. 13.

⁶CAR, 1882–83, p. 15.

⁷CAR, 1885–86, pp. 15, 17. Apart from the Nayers, there were 21 'Native Christians', 42 Muslims, 13 Brahmins, 5 'East Indians', and others.

But this disturbance was certainly an exceptional case. There seem to have been no other serious riots or disturbances in Cochin and as a result, the British Resident did not pay much attention to the domestic affairs of Cochin State. Nepotism was prevalent at the time. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Dewans themselves were selected at least twice from the same family. Dewan T. Sankunni Menon (1860–79) was the elder son of Dewan Sankara Variyar (1840–56), and Dewan Govinda Menon (1879–89) was the brother of T. Sankunni Menon, the previous Dewan.⁸ This situation was very different from that in Travancore. At this time, many of the Dewans of Travancore were ‘foreigners’ who did not have a strong relationship with the local communities, for examples, T. Madava Row (1858–72), A. Seshiah Sastri (1872–77) and V. Ramiengar (1880–87). However, as long as the state was free of serious problems, the British did not take much interest in the domestic affairs of Cochin State.

From the late 1880s, however, the Madras government began to intervene more keenly in various areas including education, medicine and the upliftment of the lower castes, as will be seen later. A Syrian Christian who was a member of the Cochin Legislative Council stated in 1936 that ‘the Government of Madras through the Resident ... interfered even in the minute details of the administration’.⁹ Certainly, the British tended to intervene in the domestic affairs of Cochin much more frequently than in those of Travancore in the 1920s and 1930s. This was partly because the successive rajas and their governments were not considered able enough to deal with growing public demands. Indeed, the Madras government does not seem to have had much confidence in the Cochin government. Regarding the quality of the administration report, for example, the Madras government stated in 1891 that ‘there is throughout the report an absence of that intelligent criticism which the Government considers may be justly expected of those administering an independent State of the importance of Cochin’.¹⁰ Perhaps the principal reason why the Madras government did not have much confidence in it was the nepotism and corruption that prevailed in the state. In 1890 *Kerala Mitram* stated

⁸ *Kerala District Gazetteer, Ernakulam*, pp. 211–12.

⁹ Paul Mampilli to Garstin, 2 Oct. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/216B, OIOC.

¹⁰ G.O. No. 476, 31 July 1891, in *CAR*, 1889–90.

that 'corruption and oppression prevail in every department, the Dewan looking after his own interest'.¹¹ In February 1896, *Malayala Manorama* also wrote that 'The bane of bribery can hardly be removed unless the general service is controlled by one entirely foreign to the various blandishments of local parasites and sycophants'.¹² This situation did not change substantially in the twentieth century. For example, when Maharaja Rama Varma died in 1932, 'not only was a respectable proportion of posts in the State Service occupied by his Consort's relatives and dependents, but both the Consort and her children attained a position of considerable affluence'.¹³ Thus, there is no doubt that numerous successive reigns in Cochin were affected by this kind of corruption. Perhaps the only exception was the reign of Raja Rama Varma who ruled Cochin from 1895 to 1914.

Raja Rama Varma had a very good reputation. J. Andrew (Resident, 1904–06) and C.G. Herbert (Dewan, 1930–35) highly appreciated the Raja's ability and personality. Andrew stated in 1906 that 'The Raja is a man of experience and of decided ability, who knows all the details of the administration and who sees that everything goes on fairly right'.¹⁴ Herbert also wrote that the Raja 'was characterised by a considerable intellect and a dominating personality and he was surprisingly free from any desire to use the position of Ruler which he occupied to benefit either himself or his relatives'.¹⁵ According to Herbert, the Raja selected several able Dewans, such as Sir P. Rajagopalachari, Sir Albion Banerji and Joseph Bhore, and raised the administration of the state 'from a most primitive condition to a point at which it suffered nothing by comparison with the administration of the neighbouring Province of Madras'.¹⁶ After describing how corrupt the state was before Raja Rama Varma came to power, the Syrian Christian member of the Legislative Council also stated that 'by His Highness's indefatigable labours and personal supervision corruption and nepotism were stamped out of the State'.¹⁷ However, this was

¹¹ *Kerala Mitram*, 21 Mar. 1890, NNR.

¹² *Malayala Manorama*, 8 Feb. 1896, NNR.

¹³ 'A Note on Cochin Politics', 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

¹⁴ 'Confidential Note', Letter No. 133, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

¹⁵ 'A Note on Cochin Politics', CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Mampilli to Garstin, 2 Oct. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/216B, OIOC.

certainly an exceptional case, and the Raja's reign came to an end when he abdicated in December 1914. The rulers who succeeded him became 'puppets swayed by selfish relatives and favourites'. They lacked 'their predecessor's personality or force of character'.¹⁸

The reason for the abdication, which was an 'uncommon thing' in those days, is not clear. The Raja himself stated in his speech that the abdication was occasioned by circumstances 'beyond his control' and added that it was due to failing health.¹⁹ However, it is doubtful that declining health was the sole or real reason. F.S. Davis, the Principal of Ernakulam College, wrote in 1923 that the Raja voluntarily abdicated 'though in the enjoyment of sound health'.²⁰ The *Kerala District Gazetteer* pointed out in 1965 that his abdication was 'owing to differences of opinion with the paramount power'.²¹ In any case, this is a matter that requires further investigation.

Once Raja Rama Varma left the throne, corruption again became rampant in Cochin State. It was a serious problem for the Government of India which was greatly concerned with the development of 'communal troubles' especially in the 1930s, as will be seen. Indeed, the British thought it necessary to intervene in the situation. They even considered the possibility of changing the Maharaja, although they fully recognized that the Maharaja still maintained substantial authority over the people of Cochin and that such overt intervention might cause more serious problems. D.M. Field, the AGG, stated in 1935:

The loyal tradition in Indian States is wonderfully strong and the Cochinites respect and like the present Maharaja ... I imagine that the Cochinites would be gravely disturbed and indignant if any public affront were offered to the present Ruler, such as enforced abdication, an upset of the established order of succession, or any overt enforced delegation of authority ...²²

¹⁸Field to Glancy, 1 Feb. 1935; 'A Note on Cochin Politics', CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

¹⁹*Malayali*, 2 Dec. 1914, NNR; *Sampadahudaya*, 18 Dec. 1914, NNR.

²⁰F.S. Davis, *Cochin: British and Indian* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1923), p. 72.

²¹*Kerala District Gazetteer, Ernakulam*, p. 215.

²²Field to Glancy, 1 Feb. 1935 CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

In addition to the 'communal troubles', the growing importance of the port of Cochin was also one of the principal reasons why the British came to pay greater attention to the domestic affairs of Cochin. The port of Cochin was located on the 'direct sea-route to Australia and the Far East' and was an important place to 'embark and disembark for South India'.²³ Although the first plan to develop the harbour was made in 1835, it was not until 1921 that work was actually started. In August 1936, after the third stage of the work was completed, Cochin was declared a major port, and the main work was finally completed in 1941.²⁴ There is no doubt that political stability was considered essential for the operation of the port. In 1935, D.M. Field, the AGG, stated that 'the future of the Cochin Port makes this [selecting a reliable man as Dewan] more than usually desirable'.²⁵

In these circumstances, the AGG and the Government of India adopted a policy of 'tactful intervention'. They tried to make the Maharaja follow the advice of his properly constituted advisors instead of 'self-seeking relatives or favourites' without 'any obvious loss of dignity and prestige'.²⁶ This type of intervention was to some extent successful, as is evident from the constitutional reforms of 1938. These reforms allowed Dewan Sir Shanmukham Chetty to introduce, after consulting the British, a kind of dyarchy in which a minister appointed from the non-official members of the Legislative Council came to manage the several departments of the administration instead of the Dewan.²⁷

The appointment of Dewans such as C.G. Herbert, ICS (Dewan, 1930-35) and Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty (Dewan, 1935-41) itself was also a major part of this 'tactful intervention'. Before these Dewans were appointed, Cochin had two local men in succession as Dewans, namely P. Narayana Menon (Dewan, 1922-25) and T.S. Narayana Ayyar (1925-30). However, they became 'subject to Palace influences' and 'the latter in particular became the tool of the then Maharani who utilized him to obtain money by extortion'. The British took this situation very seriously and con-

²³Cochin Affairs, 'Cochin' pp. 149-50, PSP, L/P&S/13/ 1275, OIOC.

²⁴*Ibid.*; CAR, 1935-36, p. 113.

²⁵Field to Glancy, 8 Jan. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Kerala District Gazetteer, Ernakulam*, p. 217; FR 15 Jan. 1938, 'Cochin Affairs', PSP, L/PS/13/1275, OIOC.

cluded that 'no local man could possibly hope to stand against Palace influences'. Thus, from 1930 onwards, the Dewans came to be chosen from outside the state.²⁸ Accordingly, one of the main roles of C.G. Herbert was to reduce 'Palace influences', and he certainly made great efforts to achieve this.²⁹ But, according to the AGG, Herbert was 'self-opinionated and heedless of His Highness's opinions and wishes' and eventually lost 'all favour' with the Maharaja. The AGG suggested that Herbert should revert to the Madras service in October 1935.³⁰

In order to select a Dewan who was 'as far as possible remote from Indian and local influence', the Viceroy proposed that a European Dewan should be appointed. But the Maharaja rejected this idea and wrote to the Viceroy that 'I am orthodox and, apart from the language difficulty there are many matters in which I must communicate with the Dewan personally in perfect freedom and complete intimacy. Obviously this is impossible in the case of a European'. The Maharaja put forward the names of N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar and Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty (1892-1953). The British did not want Gopalaswami Ayyangar, a senior member of the ICS, who had a 'strong nationalist (Congress) bias', to be Dewan and Shanmukham Chetty was selected.³¹ As the above process suggests, this was clearly a case of compromise. However, although he was not a European, the British must have been satisfied with this appointment. The AGG stated that he had 'many antecedents to his credit'. He had earned an 'international reputation' due to his achievement at the Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference; he had been President of the Madras Legislative Council; and he was also a 'banker, financier and industrialist'.³² Hence some people wondered 'whether it was exactly a promotion' when he became Dewan of Cochin.³³ It can be noted, by contrast, that the British had almost completely ceased to intervene in the selection of the Dewan in Travancore in the 1930s. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Maharaja Sri Chitra, as the ruler of one of the 'full-powered States', rejected any interference by the

²⁸Resignation of Shanmukhan Chetty, 22 July 1941, PSP, L/P&S/13/1275, OIOC.

²⁹Field to Glancy, 8 Jan. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

³⁰'Short Review of the Administration', 1936, CRR, R/2/888/216A, OIOC.

³¹Field to Glancy, 20 Feb. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

³²'Short Review of the Administration', 1936, CRR, R/2/88/216A, OIOC.

³³Cochin Affairs, p. 460, PSP, L/P&S/13/1275, OIOC.

Government of India when he selected C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar in 1936.³⁴ The degree of British intervention in these two states was by this stage clearly very different.

Meanwhile, apart from corruption, some of the rulers of Cochin did not have the ability to deal with political matters, largely due to the of modern education and other reasons, such as declining health and advancing age, at least in the eyes of the British. In Travancore, as we have seen, the princes were educated mainly by tutors. It is well known that two Maharajas, namely Ayilliam Thirunal (Maharaja, 1860-80) and Visakham Thirunal (1880-85), were educated by Sir T. Madava Row, who later became a highly reputed Dewan.³⁵ The British paid considerable attention to the education of the princes of Travancore. They usually supervised and approved the selection of the tutors and the curriculum of their studies. In the case of Sri Chitra Thirunal (Maharaja, 1931-47) in particular, the British seem to have paid special attention to his education. Several Indian and European tutors were appointed to teach him subjects such as English literature and composition, English and Indian history, the outline of world history, geography and elementary science. D.W. Dodwell of the Indian Civil Service and Captain G.T.B. Harvey were two of the tutors appointed. Moreover, this Maharaja of Travancore was given administrative training at Bangalore for about a year just before his installation as Maharaja.³⁶

The situation in Cochin seems to have been markedly different. Unlike in Travancore, the princes of Cochin were instructed in a special school for the princes. In 1900-01, 29 boys studied in the Palace High School.³⁷ It was probably due to financial reasons that school system was adopted instead of the tutor system. The ruling house of Cochin was unusually large, while the state's total population was only one-fourth of Travancore. Therefore, it might have been financially difficult for Cochin State to adopt a tutor system, which was no doubt much more expensive than the school system, and the problem in Cochin was that this school system was not always successful. Maharaja Rama Varma (1932-41), for example, lacked a 'modern education' and was completely ignorant of 'any

³⁴Rama Varma to Garstin, 1 Sep. 1936, CRR, R/2/888/207, OIOC.

³⁵Pillai, *Manual*, vol. II, p. 634.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 729-30.

³⁷CAR, 1900-01, p. LXXVI.

language but his mother tongue'.³⁸ A lack of knowledge of the English language was undoubtedly a great disadvantage in a native state in which most of the administrative transactions were conducted in English. Thus, it was largely due to a corrupt government, incapable rulers and the growing importance of Cochin as a port city that the British tended to intervene in the domestic affairs of Cochin, though they were very cautious as to how they did so, particularly in the 1930s. They fully recognized that the Maharaja was the legitimate ruler and that overt intervention might provoke anti-British feelings.

^ **Unsuccessful Missionaries and the State**

Missionary activities were not very successful in Cochin, despite considerable efforts by the missionaries. The CMS established a station in Trichur as early as in 1842 and in Kunnankulam in 1854; the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society began its work in Trichur in 1881; and the Leipzig Lutheran Mission began work in Chittur in 1882.³⁹ But conversion to Christianity was rare, compared with Travancore. Achyuta Menon stated in 1911 that 'The Protestant missions ... have not made much progress ... the native Protestants of all denominations numbering less than 2000, and even of these, many are sojourners from outside, especially Travancore'.⁴⁰ The statistics of the CMS also show this difference between Cochin and Travancore. In 1922, the CMS stations in Cochin State had only 654 baptized members, while its stations in Travancore had more than 62,000.⁴¹ A CMS missionary stated in 1920 that 'Hitherto there has been no mass movement in that area'.⁴² Most of the lower castes did not become Christians in Cochin, though the reasons are not clear.⁴³

In Cochin as well as in Travancore, the CMS missionaries preferred converts from the higher sections of society. It was partly due to this preference and partly due to the indifference of the lower castes itself that their activities in Cochin were largely confined to

³⁸Field to Glancy, 8 Jan. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

³⁹Achyuta Menon, *Manual*, p. 224.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹*Travancore and Cochin Diocesan Record*, vol. 32, No. 2, May 1992.

⁴²*Ibid.*, vol. 30, No. 4, Sep. 1920, p. 82.

⁴³As we have noted in Chapter 5, clear explanations have not been given as to why some people converted and others did not.

the higher castes. It is true that the CMS opened two 'experimental schools' with a view to 'reaching' the lower castes in Cochin. But this was as late as in 1911, and the attempt was apparently unsuccessfully, drawing as few as fifteen pupils in each school.⁴⁴ With this exception, the CMS missionaries undoubtedly gave almost all their attention to the higher castes in Cochin. For example, in order to attract Nambudiri Brahmins, who were supposed to 'exercise an enormous influence', the CMS planned to open a special Sanskrit class in the Mission High School at Trichur and to distribute a copy of the Malayalam Bible to every Nambudiri householder in Cochin.⁴⁵ However, these efforts to win over the higher castes also proved unsuccessful. The Census Report of 1921 stated that 'the stray converts that are now obtained [by the missionaries] are only from the classes of Hindus which are lowest in the social scale'.⁴⁶

The Cochin government did not need to be seriously concerned with the influence of the missionaries or a decrease in the Hindu population. On the contrary, it was broadly optimistic about the matter. The Census Report stated that 'With the advancement of education, these socio-religious distinctions—such as unapproachableness [sic]—are fast dying out and with it the necessity for embracing Christianity is also dying out'.⁴⁷ The Cochin government was thus able to make good use of mission schools without being burdened with concern as to their negative effects, i.e. the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. Consequently generous grants were given to the mission. In 1900–01, an annual grant of Rs 1500 was given to the CMS High School at Trichur alone, which the missionaries considered an important institution to establish contact with the higher castes. This grant was the most generous and constituted more than ten per cent of the total expenditure of the 124 grant-in-aid schools in Cochin.⁴⁸

However, it is also true that there was friction between the Cochin government and the CMS. This was over the 'conscience clause'. This clause was part of a new grant-in-aid code which the

⁴⁴ Annual Report for 1911, No. 56, Original Papers, CMSA.

⁴⁵ Original Papers, No. 90, 1897, CMSA.

⁴⁶ *Census of India, 1921*, vol. xix, *Cochin*, part 1, *Report* (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1922), p. 21.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ CAR, 1900–01. pp. LXXVIII–IV

Cochin government tried to introduce in 1905.⁴⁹ The purpose of the clause was to prohibit compulsory religious education in aided schools, and the CMS missionaries were naturally very concerned with the government's move. C.H. Gill, the Bishop of Travancore and Cochin, conducted a 'state visit' to the Raja and then interviewed with Dewan N. Pattabhiraama Rau, whom the British Resident described as 'an obstinate man of no particular ability', to propose an addendum that the conscience clause would not operate if there were some secular schools near the grant-in-aid schools.⁵⁰ But, despite his efforts, the grant-in-aid code was enforced, and grant to the CMS High School was withheld as the missionaries refused to recognize the conscience clause.⁵¹ However, this situation lasted only a few months. In 1907 a new Dewan, A.R. Banerji, was appointed. He was a Bengali Brahmin and a member of the ICS, who had received 'all his education' in England and soon after his appointment, the conscience clause was abolished.⁵² C.H. Gill wrote regarding their activities in Cochin State in 1918 that 'we have no trouble whatever in our High School or other Schools ... all has been tranquil since'.⁵³ The CMS was thus able to give religious education in Cochin State without any restrictions. This situation was very different from that in Travancore, where religious education was not allowed to be given during school hours, as we have seen. In this sense it can be said that Cochin State was more tolerant towards missionaries than was Travancore State.

Public Demands for Education and the State's Response

The Cochin government was very slow to provide education to its people compared with the Travancore government, though the first attempt to establish vernacular schools in Cochin was much earlier than in Travancore. In 1818, the Cochin government set up thirty-three vernacular schools with a view to train 'young men for State service'. However, they were abolished in 1832, and instead six vernacular schools were re-established in each taluq in the state three years later.

⁴⁹Original Papers, No. 70, 1906, T&C, CMSA.

⁵⁰Bishop to Durrant, 31 Aug. 1906, Original Papers, T&C, CWMA; 'Confidential Note', Letter No. 133, 19 Feb. 1906, MPP, OIOC.

⁵¹Gill to Wigram, 28 Dec. 1918, Original Papers, T&C, CMSA.

⁵²Bishop to Durrant, 1 Apr. 1907, Original Papers, T&C, CMSA.

⁵³Gill to Wigram, 28 Dec. 1918, Original Papers, T&C, CMSA.

But they were not very different from the indigenous schools and were not successful.⁵⁴ As to English schools, the first schools was opened in Trichur in 1837. Although there were only two English schools in Trichur and Ernakulam in 1864, their numbers increased after A.F. Sealy, M.A. Cambridge, was appointed Headmaster of the school in Ernakulam in 1865.⁵⁵ By 1873, the Cochin government had five English Schools with 390 students.⁵⁶ In the area of English education, Cochin seems to have been more advanced than Travancore. Although it had about four times as large a population as Cochin, Travancore had only 892 pupils in sixteen English schools in 1872–73.⁵⁷

However, facilities for vernacular education in Cochin were very backward. In 1872–73, the Cochin government still had the six vernacular schools established in the 1830s, but there were only 143 pupils in these schools.⁵⁸ In addition, the Cochin government did not establish village schools, which, as we have seen, the Travancore government started to set up on a large scale as early as in 1871. Moreover, rules for grant-in-aid were not adopted until 1889, whereas they were introduced in Travancore in 1875; and attention was not paid to female education for a long time. It was as late as in 1889 that the first government English school for girls was opened in Trichur. Travancore had its first school of the kind in the 1860s.⁵⁹

These indicators of backwardness, especially the neglect of vernacular (Malayalam) education and the absence of government village schools, became a cause of public concern. In 1883, *Kerala Mitram* expressed 'a hope that the Dewan of Cochin will take the necessary steps for establishing village schools'.⁶⁰ In 1887 again, the newspaper pointed out the 'great neglect' of Malayalam education in Cochin⁶¹ which came in for frequent criticism by the Madras government as well. In 1888 it stated that 'elementary teaching is still much neglected, and the neglect is a serious blot on the

⁵⁴CAR, 1840–41, p. 143.

⁵⁵CAR, 1887–88, p. 13.

⁵⁶CAR, 1872–73, p. 27.

⁵⁷TAR, 1871–72, pp. 70–1.

⁵⁸CAR, 1872–73, p. 27.

⁵⁹Achyuta Menon, *Manual*, pp. 294, 299. The Carmelite Mission established a convent girl's school at Ernakulam in about 1887.

⁶⁰*Kerala Mitram*, May 1883, NNR.

⁶¹*Kerala Mitram*, Aug. 1887, NNR.

administration' and urged the Cochin government to introduce a grant-in-aid system.⁶² Evidently, at the time the Madras government wanted vernacular education, rather than English, to be encouraged. In 1892 it stated that:

vernacular instruction is much more popular than English in the State of Cochin, and the extent to which pupils resorted to the newly-opened schools of the former class was noteworthy. There is nothing to regret in this, and the Government would gladly see a hundredfold increase in the vernacular schools maintained or aided by the Sirkar, even if for the time English education were to be neglected.⁶³

Under pressure from the Madras government, a grant-in-aid code was adopted in Cochin in 1889, and due to the enforcement of this code, the number of aided anglo-vernacular schools increased from four to eighteen by 1890, and sixteen 'purely Vernacular Schools' were given grants for the first time. In addition, a normal school was opened in Trichur in July 1890 with a view to training teachers for Malayalam education.⁶⁴ Thus substantial efforts were made by the Cochin government in the field of education, though this was not until the late 1880s. The British Resident stated in 1892 that 'The Administration has begun to realize its responsibilities in regard to education'.⁶⁵

However, despite the delay in implementing educational policies by the Cochin government, the state of education in Cochin was not very backward even in the 1890s. In a sense, it was more advanced than in the Madras Presidency and the Madras government itself fully recognized the situation. The British Resident reported the following statistics in 1894.⁶⁶

⁶²G.O. No. 490, 491, 14 July 1888, MPP, OIOC.

⁶³G.O. No. 448, Political, 27 Jul. 1892, in CAR 1890-91. The attitude of the Madras government towards Cochin seems to have been very different from its attitude towards the Madras Presidency itself. In 1903, a Madras-based newspaper criticized the educational policy of the Madras government saying that 'Owing to the indifference of Government and its unwillingness to spend much money on the Educational Department, the primary schools in this Presidency have been gradually decreasing in number... The Government is ready to squeeze to spend any money from their benefit'. *Swadesamitran*, 27 July 1903, NNR.

⁶⁴CAR, 1889-90, pp. 94, 108, 120.

⁶⁵Hannington to Ch. Sec., 19 May 1892, in CAR, 1890-91.

⁶⁶Grigg to Ch. Sec., 27 May 1894, in CAR, 1892-93.

| | Proportion of pupils of the population (%) | That of the population of school going age (%) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Cochin | 3.40 | 22.3 |
| Travancore | 4.46 | 29.7 |
| Madras Presidency | 2.06 | 13.7 |

One of the reasons for this rather advanced situation was that many private unaided schools were established in the late nineteenth century. G.T. Mackenzie, the British Resident, stated in 1903 that 'the people themselves without a penny of assistance from the Darbar [government] maintain a constantly increasing number of elementary schools'.⁶⁷ In fact, the number of private unaided schools increased considerably in the 1890s. It rose from 543 in 1891-92 to 862 in 1897-98,⁶⁸ and the Madras government frequently urged the Cochin government to bring these unaided schools under government control.⁶⁹ However, whether they were aided or unaided, there is no doubt that the educational development of Cochin greatly depended on these private institutions.

This tendency did not largely change in Cochin for at least a few decades into the twentieth century. Although the relative importance of government schools gradually increased, the Cochin government still largely depended on non-government schools, as Table 15 indicates.

But who established these private schools? Roughly speaking, Syrian Christians and other Indians were the major founders of the private schools, though the CMS and Roman Catholic missionaries also educated a large number of pupils in their own institutions, as Table 16 suggests.

Among the running bodies, 'masters themselves' means the masters of indigenous schools, who were usually called *asans*. As

⁶⁷Mackenzie to Ch. Sec., in G.O. No. 587, 23 Dec. 1903. The word 'Darbar' or 'Durbar' sometimes indicated the government of a princely state itself. In 1935, the Government of India agreed to use the term 'Government of Cochin' in place of 'Darbar' in official correspondence with the state. C.G. Prior to Garstin. 11 Dec. 1935, 'Cochin Affaris', p. 451, PSP, L/PS/13/1275, OIOC.

⁶⁸CAR, 1891-92, pp. 1870-98.

⁶⁹*Report of the Education Survey Committee. Cochin State* (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1934), p. 61.

Table 15: The Percentage of Pupils Educated in Government Schools in Travancore and Cochin, 1900–31

| Year | Travancore (%) | Cochin |
|---------|----------------|--------|
| 1900–01 | 24.8 | 17.3 |
| 1910–11 | 37.5 | 33.6 |
| 1920–21 | 48.3 | 40.5 |
| 1930–31 | 44.5 | 34.4 |

Source: Travancore Administration Report, 1900–01, 1910–11, 1920–21, 1930–31; Cochin Administration Report for the same years.

Table 16: Running Bodies of Aided Schools in Cochin and the Number of Pupils

| Running bodies | 1900–01 | 1910–11 | 1920–21 | 1930–31 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Government (Aided) | 6,831 | 17,265 | 39,006 | 44,416 |
| CMS or Protestant | 1,333 | 1,797 | 2,277 | 3,212 |
| Roman Catholic missionaries | 480 | 1,670 | 10,110 | 4,979 |
| Indian priests | 2,442 | 5,660 | 8,276 | 32,907 |
| Indians | 5,020 | 9,007 | 24,112 | 55,100 |
| Masters themselves | 1,046 | 718 | 1,152 | 5,378 |
| Unaided | 22,448 | 15,246 | 11,437 | 6,921 |
| Total | 39,600 | 51,363 | 96,370 | 152,913 |

Source: Cochin Administration Report, 1900–01, 1910–11, 1920–21, 1930–31.

for 'Indian priests', many of them were undoubtedly Syrian Christians, though Hindu temples also had some schools such as the Tirumala Devaswom High School which had 239 boys in 1900–01. In the same year, there were 124 aided schools in Cochin and at least 31 schools were run by Christians excluding 11 CMS and 3 Zenana Mission schools, and most of these 31 schools were undoubtedly run by Syrian Christians. These schools were called, for example, the Jacobite Syrian Girls' School, the Parazhanji Mar

Dionysius School, or the Parapur Church School.⁷⁰ In addition to Christians, 'Indians' or 'Native gentlemen or ladies' also educated a great number of pupils in Cochin, as Table 16 indicates. Although it is difficult to specify exactly who ran these schools, it is at least clear that Syrian Christians and other Indians, by establishing private schools, greatly contributed to the development of education in Cochin.

To sum up, the state of education in Cochin was very backward until the 1890s, compared with Travancore. In fact, the Cochin government did not pay much attention to education, especially to vernacular education. However, this situation began to improve markedly in the 1890s. Strong and growing demands for education, especially for vernacular (Malayalam) education, began to emerge largely from the late nineteenth century, and, as a result, a large number of private schools were established without any support from the government. The Cochin government, in accordance with the 'advice' of the Madras government, promoted vernacular education rather than English education by giving grants-in-aid to these private schools. Consequently, Cochin attained the second highest literacy rate in India of 33.7 per cent in 1931, which was remarkably high compared with that of only 10.8 in the Madras Presidency.⁷¹

Medicine: Public Demand and British Intervention

As in the case of education, medical development was also delayed in Cochin, and the Madras government strongly intervened in this area from the late nineteenth century as well. The first attempt to introduce European medical treatment was made by a missionary called Rev. J. Dawson, who opened a dispensary at Mattancheri near British Cochin as early as in 1818. However, it was closed after two or three years even though it received a monthly grant from the Cochin government. In 1823, the Civil Surgeon of British Cochin was made the *ex-officio* Darbar (government) Physician, and a dresser was attached to the jail at Ernakulam. The first government hospital, called the Charity Hospital, was established in 1848; this later developed into the General Hospital. In 1875, a second hospital was opened at Trichur. Vaccina-

⁷⁰CAR, 1900-01, pp. LXXVIII-IV.

⁷¹Census of India, 1931, vol. 1, *India*, part 1, *Report* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 339.

tion was first introduced into Cochin in the 1800s and six trained vaccinators were employed from 1812 onwards. As in other parts of India, however, vaccination was dreaded 'as much as the small-pox itself' and it therefore made little progress. Although a vaccination department was organized in 1886, the situation did not change immediately.⁷² In 1889, the Madras government criticized the Cochin government on the grounds that 'the proportion of persons vaccinated to the total population of the State is lamentably small'.⁷³

The general condition of medicine in Cochin also seems to have been far from adequate. In 1889, J.C. Hannington, the British Resident, severely criticized the medical policy of the Cochin government, stating that:

The medical wants of the inhabitants are very imperfectly attended to by the Sircar [State]. Not merely is there a totally insufficient medical staff and a lack of dispensaries and hospitals, but there is a lamentable and cruel neglect of the miserable diseased poor. There is no provision whatever for the alleviation of the sufferings of lepers ... There is no accommodation for insane persons...⁷⁴

Hannington not only criticized the Cochin government but also gave it extremely detailed 'advice'. In 1890, he laid before the Cochin government a 'fairly complete scheme' for the reorganization of the Medical Department. In this scheme he called for 'a large staff, with a definite scale of pay and promotion, a better means of supervision of out-hospitals and dispensaries'.⁷⁵ He also expressed detailed views, such as that:

Chittoor and Iringalacodu dispensaries should be raised to the rank of hospitals capable of accommodating in-patients; a hospital for in-patients should be established at Nemmara, and dispensaries at Wadakancherry, Kondagalore and Annavadda.⁷⁶

The Madras government supported the Resident's plan, and the Cochin government began to make substantial efforts in this direc-

⁷²CAR, 1940-41, p. 127; Achyuta Menon, *Manual*, pp. 285-8.

⁷³G.O. No. 381, 382. 2 July 1889, MPP, OIOC.

⁷⁴Hannington to Ch. Sec., 13 June 1889, in G.O. No. 381, 382, 22 July 1889, MPP, OIOC.

⁷⁵Hannington to Ch. Sec. 30 Apr. 1891, in CAR, 1889-90.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

tion.⁷⁷ The Resident reported in 1892 that ‘I am exceedingly glad to record that steps are being taken ... for the complete organization of the Medical Department in accordance with the scheme submitted by me in 1890’.⁷⁸

One of the reasons why Hannington was so keen on development in this area was that Cochin was seen to be very backward compared with Travancore until the 1880s. Although the number of patients treated in government institutions increased remarkably after the 1890s, the government institutions treated extremely small number of patients in 1870–71 and 1880–81, as Table 17 shows. In fact, the Cochin government had only two hospitals, in Ernakulam and Trichur, until 1882. Although several hospitals and dispensaries were established from the mid-1880s, government medical facilities were insufficient to cope with the growing public demand.⁷⁹ In 1888, *Kerala Mitram*, a Malayalam newspaper, urged the necessity of increasing the number and improving the conditions of the existing hospitals in Cochin State.⁸⁰

Table 17: Number of Patients Treated in Government Institutions, 1870–1931

| Year | Cochin | Travancore |
|---------|---------|------------|
| 1870–71 | 2,454 | 66,757 |
| 1880–81 | 6,797 | 92,419 |
| 1890–91 | 70,822 | 137,880 |
| 1900–01 | 182,695 | 438,433 |
| 1910–11 | 265,973 | 543,345 |
| 1920–21 | 313,267 | 980,238 |
| 1930–31 | 753,164 | 1,975,328 |

Source: Cochin Administration Report and Travancore Administration Report for 1870–71, 1880–81, 1890–91, 1900–01, 1910–11, 1920–21, 1930–31.

Communities other than Hindus adopted a much more positive attitude towards western medicine. Table 18 indicates that the Jews

⁷⁷G.O. No. 476, 31 July 1891, in CAR, 1889–90.

⁷⁸Hannington to Ch. Sec. 19 May 1892 in CAR, 1890–91.

⁷⁹CAR, 1887–88, p. 88; CAR, 1888–89, p. 71.

⁸⁰*Kerala Mitram*, 1 June 1888, NNR.

and the 'Europeans and Eurasians' used government institutions far more frequently than did other communities.⁸¹ Apart from these communities, the Christians and Muslims were much more positive than were the Hindus.⁸² Evidently, non-Hindu communities contributed greatly to the growth of public demand for western medicine in Cochin State. Considering their numerical strength, the presence of Syrian Christians especially seems to have been extremely important.

Table 18: Communities of the Patients Treated in Government Medical Institutions in Cochin State in 1888-89

| Community | No. of patients | No. per 1000 of population |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Christians | 6,195 | 35.7 |
| Hindus | 3,628 | 7.2 |
| Muslims | 1,345 | 29.0 |
| Jews | 1,189 | 1041.1 |
| Europeans and Eurasians | 753 | 2444.8 |
| Total | 13,110 | 18.1 |

Source: Cochin Administration Report, 1888-89, p.73; Report on the Census of Cochin 1891, part I, The Reviews (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1893), p.50.

Besides western medicine, indigenous medicine was also paid attention to in Cochin as in Travancore. Although Cochin was less advanced than Travancore in this area, it was certainly much more progressive than the Madras Presidency. The first substantial attempt to promote indigenous medicine was made in 1897, when eleven vaidyans were employed by the Cochin government. Six of them were located in each of the seven taluqs except Cochin taluq, and the remaining five vaidyans were attached to the palace. These

⁸¹In 1891, there were 1142 Jews, 38 Europeans and 270 Eurasians in the Cochin State.

⁸²The reason why Muslims, who were usually considered more conservative, showed such a positive attitude towards western medicine is not clear. However, the hospitals were situated in urban areas, and some Muslims residing in these areas such as traders may have adopted such an attitude.

vaidyans were expected to treat those who objected to visit 'public hospitals and dispensaries'.⁸³

In addition to employing vaidyans, the government supported private efforts as well. In 1915, the Cochin government placed a site at Cheruthuruthi, near the border with British Malabar, at the disposal of the 'Keraliya Ayurvedic Samajam'.⁸⁴ This association established an Ayurvedic hospital on the site, and it continued to receive a contribution from the Cochin government.⁸⁵ However, the establishment of a government Ayurvedic hospital was considerably delayed. It was as late as in 1932–33 that the Rama Varma Central Ayurvedic Hospital was founded in Trichur. Also, a full time superintendent, who supervised rural *vaidyasalas* and *vishavaidyasalas*, was not appointed until 1935–36.⁸⁶

Even so, the policy of the Cochin government towards indigenous medicine was more advanced than that of the Madras government. As we have seen in Chapter 4, the committee appointed by the Madras government to enquire into indigenous medicine praised the attainments of Cochin as well as Travancore.⁸⁷ The reasons for this were the same in Cochin as in Travancore: The Hindu state of Cochin not only had little hesitation in introducing indigenous medicine, which was cheaper and more popular among conservative people, but also could reinforce its legitimacy as a Hindu state by encouraging Ayurveda, which was one of the main elements of Hindu culture. But, in the case of Cochin, one more point should be added, which is that many members of the ruling family were themselves practitioners of indigenous medicine. In 1924, for example, Kerala Varma, the First Prince of Cochin, was a 'private practitioner especially in poisons, animal, mineral and vegetable', and the Seventh Prince, at that time, intended to deal with the Ayurvedic system of medicine.⁸⁸ Also, Maharaja Rama Varma (1932–41) was himself 'a renowned physician' while he was heir apparent.⁸⁹ Thus, the ruling family of Cochin had a special

⁸³CAR, 1896–97, p. 97.

⁸⁴Literally, 'Malayali Ayurvedic Association'.

⁸⁵Krishna Menon, *Progress of Cochin*, p. 390; Davis, *Cochin British and Indian*, p. 91.

⁸⁶Vishavaidyan is 'a dealer in antidotes'.

⁸⁷*Report of the Committee on the Indigenous Systems of Medicine* (Madras: Government Press, 1923), part 1, p. 6.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, part 2, pp. 85–6.

⁸⁹'Cochin Affairs', p. 140, PSP, L/P&S/13/1275, OIOC. The ruling house of

interest in Ayurveda and this was undoubtedly one of the causes that promoted the development of indigenous medicine in Cochin.

Government Policy towards the Lower Castes

Caste disabilities prevalent in Travancore could 'almost without modification' be applied to Cochin.⁹⁰ Tindal or untouchability strongly existed in the society. In 1871 T. Shunguny Menon, the Dewan of Cochin, submitted a report to the Madras government which stated that the lower castes were not permitted to use public roads; they were not permitted to enter or approach within a certain distance of many courts and public offices; and they were excluded from public services.⁹¹

The first substantial attempt by the Cochin government to remove these restrictions was made in 1871 under pressure from the Madras government, as was the case in Travancore. After the assault on Rev. W. Lee in south Travancore in 1868, the Madras government ordered the Cochin government to submit a report on its caste disabilities. In reply, T. Shunguny Menon, the Dewan of Cochin, stated that they would adopt the following policies regarding the matter: Firstly, the government would establish several vernacular schools and 'care' would be taken to 'make them available to all classes', though the existing six vernacular schools and a Sanskrit school could not be open to the lower castes. Secondly, he wrote that 'All highways connecting one part of the country with another' should be declared open to all castes and a new line would be opened 'where sections of main lines pass too close to places which it would be very inconvenient to throw open to all classes'. However, he declined to throw open the high streets of towns on the ground that the enforcement of this measure 'would be most unpopular and would create discontent in all but a few of the lowest

Cochin was an unusually large one, which had 'no less than 106 males and 113 females' in 1923. Princes of this house were therefore educated in a special school, instead of receiving education from private tutors, and they were expected to take a certain profession after completing their education. Besides becoming Ayurvedic physicians, one became a Munsiff (judicial officer) in the British service, and another a lecturer in the Ernakulam College. But the problem of suitable employment was a 'very serious one'. Davis, *Cochin, British and Indian*, p. 72.

⁹⁰ Acting Resident to Ch. Sec., 31 Jan. 1871, in G.O. 9 Mar. 1871, MPP, OIOC.

⁹¹ Shunguny Menon to Acting Resident, 24 July 1871, in G.O. No. 75, 9 Mar. 1871, MPP, OIOC.

castes'. Thirdly, he stated that the Cochin government would remove 'all impediments to the free access by all classes to the Courts of Justice and to the public offices'. Finally, he promised to employ all castes in government offices except in 'the Revenue and Magisterial Offices'.⁹² These measures were apparently imperfect and, moreover, it is doubtful whether they were actually enforced or not. For example, the number of vernacular schools still seems to have been the same, even in 1888-89.⁹³ However, the Madras government was largely satisfied with the statement of the Dewan. It stated in 1871 that 'a very considerable step has been taken to remove caste disabilities in the Cochin State'.⁹⁴ After this the Cochin government did not take much interest in the lower castes.

It was not until 1919 that T. Vijayaraghava Charya (Dewan, 1919-22) made substantial efforts for the upliftment of the lower castes. Immediately after his appointment, he established several new schools for the 'backward classes' and threw open all schools to them apart from 'four or five'.⁹⁵ The Cochin government paid special attention to what it classified as the 'depressed classes'.⁹⁶ It introduced a system of free supply of books, slates, clothes and other school requisites, besides exempting them from the payment of school fees. The pupils were also fed daily, though free meals came to be restricted to the last day in the week as the number of pupils increased. In addition, special scholarships were sanctioned to some individuals for university courses.⁹⁷ As a result of this policy, the number of Pulayas in public schools increased remarkably. It rose from 200 in 1919 to 2900 in 1920.⁹⁸ Besides, many night schools were opened for adult members of the 'depressed classes'.⁹⁹

⁹²Shunguny Menon to Ag. Resident, 24 Jan 1871, in G.O. No. 75, 9 Mar. 1871, MPP, OIOC.

⁹³CAR, 1888-89, p. 69.

⁹⁴G.O. No. 26, 25 Jan. 1871, MPP, OIOC.

⁹⁵CAR, 1919-20, p. 45.

⁹⁶They were two hill tribes of the Kadar and Malayan, and six castes of the Kanankkan, Pulayan, Vettuvan, Sambavan (Parayan), Ullatan and Nayadi. *Census of India, 1931*. vol. xxi *Cochin*, part 1, *Report* (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1933), p. 289.

⁹⁷Krishna Manon, *Progress*, p. 63; *Census of India, 1931, Cochin*, p. 292.

⁹⁸CAR, 1919-20, p. 57.

⁹⁹Krishna Menon, *Progress*, p. 63.

Apart from these educational efforts, attention was paid to their economic and even spiritual upliftment. The colony system was introduced in 1919–20 and the first colony was established at Chalakudy in central Cochin. It afforded 'suitable accommodation in a healthy spot' to forty families of Pulaya labourers working in the vicinity. Provisions were made for giving lessons in the three R's and making mats and baskets.¹⁰⁰ Similar colonies continued to be established. In 1931, there were forty-one colonies with 1640 families in them.¹⁰¹ In these colonies, the Cochin government also created *bhajana mathoms*, or places of worship, which were 'instrumental in freeing them from many of their dark superstition and in raising the general level of their cleanliness'. Every morning the people went to the mathoms, which were officiated over by a priest chosen from among themselves.¹⁰² In addition to the colony system, co-operative societies were organized which taught them 'the methods of husbanding their meager resources' and trained them in 'habits of self-reliance and mutual trust'.¹⁰³

In addition, wells and tanks were constructed for them, and 'plots of lands' were freely leased to the people. Also, a Pulaya called P.C. Chanchan was nominated to represent the caste in the Legislative Council of Cochin,¹⁰⁴ and a Protector of the Depressed Classes was appointed in 1927. His work was, for example, to visit villages and induce the depressed classes to send their children to school; advise them to be clean; and arrange meetings to explain the value of education and the facilities provided by the government.¹⁰⁵ These efforts certainly contributed to the upliftment of the lower castes, especially in the area of education. By 1931, for example, three Pulayas including a girl reached the college level.¹⁰⁶

However, there was criticism of the colony system because it was based on the idea of segregation. In 1941, an 'educated Harijan lady' stated that the 'colony system was detrimental to the interests

¹⁰⁰CAR, 1919–20, pp. 56–7.

¹⁰¹*Census of India, 1931, Cochin*, p. 293.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, Krishna Menon, *Progress*, p. 66.

¹⁰³*Census of India, 1931, Cochin*, p. 293.

¹⁰⁴Krishna Menon, *Progress*, p. 67.

¹⁰⁵Krishna Menon, *Progress*, pp. 198–9. As the Director of Public Instruction became an *ex-officio* Protector, this work was practically conducted by the Assistant Protector.

¹⁰⁶*Census of India, 1931, Cochin*, p. 292.

of the Depressed classes' and that 'closer contact with caste Hindus was necessary for their uplift'.¹⁰⁷ However, the government was sometimes reluctant to put in more effort for the betterment of the lower castes and, compared with Travancore, it was apparently slow to implement reforms. As we have seen, the Travancore government gradually admitted Izhava pupils into government vernacular schools from about the 1890s and threw open its schools to the lowest castes such as the Pulayas by the Education Code of 1909–10. It was almost ten years before the Cochin government took similar action. The Travancore government also nominated representatives of the lower castes in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly as early as the 1900s. The Cochin government, however, did not permit the lower castes to enter Hindu temples until 1947–48. As a result of this reluctance, the British sometimes intervened in this area too, and urged the Cochin government to take more positive action. For example, the appointment of the Protector of the Depressed Classes in 1927 was the result of the AGG's suggestion to the Cochin government.¹⁰⁸

These delays could have been due to many reasons. Firstly, unlike in Travancore, conversion to Christianity was rare in Cochin, and the Cochin government was not seriously concerned with the influence of the missionaries or a decrease in the Hindu population, and therefore did not take ameliorative measures for the lower castes as keenly as did the Travancore government. The second reason could be that the Cochin government, itself considerably affected by corruption and nepotism especially in the 1920s and 1930s, was not able to recognize and respond to the demands of the lower castes. In 1926 the AGG stated that:

many reforms, especially those connected with the uplifting of the depressed classes ... have come to nothing. How far this reactionary policy is due to the Consort's influence it is hard to say, but there is undoubtedly a considerable feeling in the State that her presence so near the head of affairs is detrimental to its best interests.¹⁰⁹

However, notwithstanding the reluctance of the Cochin government, there were growing communal movements in Cochin as well as in Travancore. According to the Census Report of 1931, 'many

¹⁰⁷FR, 30 April 1941, in 'Cochin Affairs', PSP L/PS/13/1275, OIOC.

¹⁰⁸FR, 2nd half of Nov. 1926, Foreign and Political, 541-P/1926–27, NAI.

¹⁰⁹FR, 2nd half of Jun. 1926, Foreign and Political, 541-P/1926–27, NAI.

important castes and communities, including the Muslims and the Christians, have at present their caste or communal associations systematically working for the furtherance of their interests'.¹¹⁰ Among the Izhavas (Tiyas), for example, Sri Narayana Guru's influence was strong in Cochin as well, which 'galvanized the dormant community into rigorous activity'. Accordingly, the Thiyya Mahajana Sabha and other yogams of the Izhavas were established which worked for social reform and upliftment of the community. The 'depressed communities' also began to establish their caste associations. The Pulayas had the Pulaya Mahajana Sabha and other associations.¹¹¹

The British authorities paid considerable attention to these movements in Cochin. In 1935, D.M. Fields, the AGG, stated that communal dissension permeated 'every department and every activity' in the state.¹¹² They were afraid that these communal movements would become a force directed against the British or the native state which they supported. The AGG pointed out that there was 'a body of opinion in Cochin with republican tendencies' and that 'the seeds of discontent and revolution ... may sprout unless a timely remedy is applied'.¹¹³ The Government of India held the same view as the AGG. Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, wrote in his letter to the Maharaja of Cochin with regard to communal movements that 'I have reason to believe that serious difficulties of this character already exist, and I can only express the hope that they will not become more pronounced in the future'.¹¹⁴ Though, the British were evidently seriously concerned with the development of communal movements in Cochin, the Maharaja's own view seems to have been completely different. In 1935, he stated in his letter to the Viceroy that 'happily no such [communal] troubles exist at present in my State'.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰*Census of India, 1931, Cochin*, p. 261.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 294. The Thiyya Mahajana Sabha was called the Ezhava Samajam until 1927, and it again changed its name to the Cochin SNDP Yogam in 1938. P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1972), p. 466.

¹¹²Field to Glancy, 1 Feb. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678, OIOC.

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴Willingdon to Maharaja, 2 Mar. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678 OIOC.

¹¹⁵Maharaja to Willingdon, 1 March. 1935, CRR, R/1/1/2678.

This difference in attitude between the Government of India and Cochin State towards communal movements is also evident in the case of the 'Tiya memorial'. This was a memorial sent to Lord Willingdon by the Tiyas of Cochin residing in Ceylon in 1933. In the memorial they claimed that the Tiyas were not allowed access to 'various public roads'; that Hindu temples were closed to them; and that 'the public service fortified with caste Hindus affords no access' to them.¹¹⁶ Although D.M. Field, the AGG, realized that the petition contained 'a great deal of exaggeration', he at the same time pointed out that there was 'widespread discontent among the middle and lower classes' and tried to persuade the Maharaja to adopt a 'wise and statesmanlike policy'. The Government of India also stated that 'a friendly warning' should be given to the Maharaja regarding the distribution of posts in the government service, which was one of the principal demands from several communities.¹¹⁷ However, the Maharaja, who was 'very orthodox and conservative' and 'impervious to modern influence',¹¹⁸ did not comply with this advice. Regarding the 'Tiya memorial', the Maharaja stated that:

they [the petitioners] refer to temple-entry, untouchability, caste system, provision of common tanks, common wells ... they are based on age-long customs which have obtained the sanctity of religion and law, and they are too ingrained upon the habits and customs of the people that it is impossible to abolish them by a stroke of the pen without greatly provoking the sentiments of a large majority of the people.¹¹⁹

The Maharaja was apparently not ready at all to listen to the demands of the people who wanted more equal treatment. To him, their demands were 'unreasonable requests' which were 'calculated to wound the feeling of others'.¹²⁰

In the meantime, the Temple Entry Proclamation was issued in Travancore in 1936. But, not surprisingly, a similar proclamation was not issued until 1947-48 in Cochin and perhaps the most important reason for the delay was the personality of the Maharaja.

¹¹⁶Memorial Committee to AGG, 1 Dec. 1933, CRR, R/2/887/204, OIOC.

¹¹⁷Field to Maharaja, 19 Feb. 1934; Foreign and Political Dept. to Field, 13 June 1934, CRR, R/2/887/204, OIOC.

¹¹⁸Field to Deputy Sec., 22 Mar. 1934. 1934 and 19 May 1934, CRR, R/2/887/204, OIOC.

¹¹⁹Maharaja to Field, 1 Mar. 1934, CRR, R/2/887/204, OIOC.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

This 'very conservative and orthodox' Maharaja had no will to issue a similar proclamation, though demands for temple entry were frequently expressed after 1936 in Cochin as well. In 1938, for example, the 'All Cochin Temple-Entry Conference' was held at Ernakulam to demand a similar proclamation to that issued in Travancore.¹²¹ The Maharaja of Cochin was however firmly opposed to the opening of the temples to the lower castes. Sir Shanmukham Chetty (Dewan, 1935-41) told the Izhava's organization in 1940 that the Izhavas should not 'embarrass the Maharaja on that issue'.¹²² Also, as we have seen, the missionaries' efforts were not very successful in Cochin, and the number of conversions was very small. Therefore, since Cochin State did not feel the threat of Christianity very strongly, it may have attributed to its negative policy. The lower castes were not permitted temple entry in Cochin until the Cochin Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation v of 1123 (1947-48) was issued.¹²³ By the time, the Maharaja's power had almost ceased to exist and most power had been transferred to the popularly elected Chief Minister.¹²⁴

Cochin as a Hindu State

No doubt the rulers of Cochin identified themselves as rulers of a Hindu state. They must have thought that protecting Hinduism was one of the principal functions of the state, and the Maharaja's stubborn rejection of temple entry in the 1930s was, in a sense, normal behaviour for the ruler of a Hindu state. Also, as in Travancore, Cochin State maintained *uttupura* to give 'charity' to the Brahmins and managed *devaswoms*. The ruling family had a special temple called the Purnatrayisa Temple for themselves in Trippunithura near Ernakulam.¹²⁵ The Rajas usually resided in this town. In 1858, Sir Charles Allen Lawson, a journalist and the Secretary of the Madras Chamber of Commerce, reported that the Raja 'rises a little before six, devotes about an hour to private affairs, then proceeds to the bath, and performs the many tedious ceremonies enjoined on all good Hindoos,

¹²¹FR, 15 Feb. 1938, in 'Cochin Affairs', PSP, L/P&S/13/1275, OIOC.

¹²²FR, 2nd half of Jan. 1940, in 'Cochin Affairs', PSP, L/P&S/13/1275, OIOC.

¹²³*Kerala District Gazetteer, Ernakulam*, p. 222.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*

¹²⁵A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1979), p. 187.

which, with prayers at the pagoda, occupy him until ten, at which time he returns to the palace'.¹²⁶

However, the sense of identity as a Hindu state seems to have been considerably weaker in Cochin than in Travancore. Unlike the rulers of Travancore, those of Cochin at least did not regard themselves as servants of a Hindu god, nor did the state perform splendid rituals such as the murajapam and hiranyagarbham. Perhaps this difference was largely due to the political situation in the eighteenth century. As we have seen, it was Martanda Varma (Maharaja, 1729–58) of Travancore who dedicated his state to Sri Padmanabha and originated major state rituals. He rapidly expanded his territory and needed to establish, by using religion and rituals, firmer authority over the newly-conquered areas. On the other hand, Cochin was a small state which had been in existence since at least the sixteenth century.¹²⁷ Accordingly, the problem of creating and maintaining the authority of the ruler was much less in Cochin. This may be one of the reasons why Cochin State did not express a Hindu-state ideology as strongly as did Travancore.

In addition, the fact that Travancore expanded its territory from the Tamil area to the Malayalam area may be another reason. Prior to its shift to Trivandrum, the capital city of Travancore (Venad) was Padmanabhapuram in today's Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu. In other words, Travancore was situated on the border of or outside the frontier of Kerala. At least this was the perception of the Nambudiri Brahmins. There were no Nambudiri villages to the south of Quilon River, and Nambudiri women crossing the river were said to 'lose' caste.¹²⁸ It was perhaps partly for this reason that the women of the Travancore ruling family were not married to the Nambudiris, while the Cochin ruling family had marital relationships with them.¹²⁹ Thus, the Tamil origin of Travancore was at least one of the reasons why the state created a number of rituals, most of which required the participation of the Nambudiri Brahmins.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 108–9.

¹²⁷A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History* (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1967), p. 147.

¹²⁸Shungoonny Menon, *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times* (1878, reprinted New Delhi: AES, 1985), p. 32.

¹²⁹K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* (1924–37, reprinted New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1983), vol. 2, p. 32.

Conclusion

The British came to take an increasing interest in the administration of the Cochin government from the late nineteenth century onwards. They began to intervene in the areas of education and medicine and in the 1920s and 1930s, much attention was paid to policy towards the lower castes and communal movements. In fact, many of the basic policies of the Cochin government in these areas were made in accordance with the 'advice' of the British Residents, and the affairs of Cochin were intervened in much more frequently than those of neighbouring Travancore.

The reasons for this difference might be as follows: First of all, Cochin was apparently backward in the fields of medicine and education, as compared to Travancore. Cochin State had neither the institutions to provide vernacular education nor a grant-in-aid system until the late 1880s; medical facilities in the 1880s were poor; and Cochin was backward in its policies towards the lower castes as well. The Resident, who also supervised affairs in Travancore, naturally compared these two states and sought to intervene in the more backward one. In addition, nepotism and corruption prevailed in Cochin, and the British did not repose confidence in the ability of the Cochin government to run the administration properly. The princes themselves lacked a broad-based education which, for example, produced a ruler who was 'impervious to modern influence'.¹³⁰ It is clear that the ruler's ability to govern or his personality were sometimes determining factors in a political system in which his opinions or preferences had to be taken seriously. Finally, the growing importance of the port of Cochin was one of the factors that made the British pay greater attention to the domestic affairs of Cochin.

However, it is true that changes similar to those in Travancore did occur in Cochin. The communal identities of a variety of castes and communities came to the fore and many associations were formed; the state had to introduce policies for the upliftment of the lower castes to deal with their growing demands; and the state attempted, though it ultimately failed, to introduce a measure to prohibit religious education in aided schools, thus undoubtedly responding to anti-missionary feelings in society. But it is equally

¹³⁰Field to Deputy Sec., 19 May 1934, CRR, R/2/887/204, OIOC.

true that Cochin State did not implement these policies as strongly as did Travancore State, perhaps because the missionaries did not have such an impact in Cochin. Cochin State did not have to worry about the growing influence of Christianity, whereas in Travancore, the growth of Hindu revivalism was greatly stimulated by vigorous and relatively successful missionary activities. In addition, the delay in implementing educational and medical policies in Cochin was also the indirect result of the failure of the missionaries. As we have seen, these policies were largely adopted in co-operation and competition with the missionaries in Travancore. In other words, the strong presence of the missionaries in Travancore was at least one of the factors that promoted social and political changes, and stimulated the process of state-building and social reform.

Conclusion

The triangular relationship between Christian missionaries, the princely state of Travancore and the British colonial authorities was not static but constituted a more complex and changing situation than has previously been considered. Despite their evident religious differences, the missionaries and the Hindu state were not always confrontational. The British authorities did not always support the missionaries, nor did they always try to intervene in the domestic affairs of Travancore. The positions, interests, attitudes and policies of each of these three groups changed substantially during the period which this study covers, and indeed their relationship underwent a structural change from the late nineteenth century onwards.

In 1858, Sir T. Madava Row, a renowned administrator, was formally appointed Dewan of Travancore, and Travancore State made substantial and enthusiastic efforts to transform itself into a modern state. For a state keen to introduce 'enlightened and progressive ideas from the West',¹ the educational and medical activities of the missionaries were very valuable. Pioneers in western education, the missionaries managed a great number of schools; likewise the medical institutions of the missionaries with highly-trained European doctors were extremely useful to the state. The missionaries in turn frequently praised the efforts of the state to 'modernize'. In this way, during the 1860s and the 1870s, Travancore State and the missionaries were able to largely co-exist and co-operate rather than engage in hostile confrontation.

It is true that the missionaries were also a potential threat to the existing social and religious order in this self-declared Hindu state. The number of converts to Christianity increased constantly. But the state did not pay much attention to this matter until the late nineteenth century, largely because conversion to Christianity was

¹*SMPAP*, 1st Meeting, 1904, Dewan's Address, p. 3.

mostly confined to the lower castes. The principal function of the Hindu state was to protect the supreme god, Sri Padmanabha, and the temples in the state, and the concern of the state was with maintaining the Hindu tradition of the higher castes who were the only politically influential section of society. The lower castes were not considered to be within the religious system which the state was expected to protect until the late nineteenth century, and therefore the religion of the lower castes, who largely remained obedient agricultural labourers under their former 'masters' even if they became Christians, had basically little to do with the state until the powerful emergence of Hindu revivalism and communal movements.

Meanwhile, in the 1860s and 1870s, the British authorities were still keen to intervene in the existing social order, particularly with respect to caste disabilities. They were preoccupied with the idea of 'civilizing' India, as their attitude to the breast-cloth disturbance in the late 1850s clearly demonstrates. It is true that Queen Victoria declared in 1858 that the British government should respect the 'rights, dignity, and honour of native princes' and 'the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India'.² Also, Thomas Metcalf has argued that the British, considering that it was 'too dangerous to interfere directly with Indian customs and beliefs', greatly changed their attitude after the Mutiny.³ But this was not the case with respect to Travancore. Both the Madras government and the missionaries were deeply concerned with social problems in Travancore even after the Mutiny. The missionaries frequently approached the Madras government, and their demands were to a great extent accepted and supported. In other words, in the 1860s and 1870s, the missionaries, Travancore State and the Madras government shared at least some elements of the same value system. They all appreciated the need for westernization and modernization, and were, more or less, preoccupied with the idea of the superiority of western culture as manifested in education and medicine. Nationalism, which enthusiastically disputed many aspects of western colonial dominance, was not as yet very strong. Under these circumstances, the missionaries and the Hindu state, even

²*Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 18, 1859, Paper No. 110, pp. 14-15.

³Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 132-3.

though they were potentially confrontational, maintained a favourable relationship during this period.

This favourable relationship greatly deteriorated towards the end of the nineteenth century. As Hindu revivalism and communalism emerged, the state as well as the higher castes came to be seriously concerned with the decreasing percentage of the Hindu population and the expanding influence of the missionaries and Christianity. As a result, in the 1890s and 1900s, the Travancore government adopted a number of anti-missionary policies including the prohibition of religious education during school hours and, for the first time, took some measures of its own for the upliftment of the lower castes. One missionary stated in 1900 that 'during the last decade the whole policy of Government has been changed'.⁴

Meanwhile, it became increasingly difficult for the missionaries to expect any support from the British authorities after the late nineteenth century. The British became very sensitive to the religious feelings of the people as Indian nationalism and Hindu revivalism emerged. It is true that Lord Curzon (Viceroy, 1899–1905) intervened extensively in the domestic affairs of the princely states. But, as far as Travancore was concerned, he was very careful not to provoke the feelings of the Indians and tried to avoid intervening in matters related to social and religious customs. In the twentieth century, this tendency became even clearer with the stated policy of non-interference of Lord Minto (Viceroy, 1905–10). In Travancore, although the British intervened to some extent at the time that of Maharaja Sri Chitra was a minor from 1924 to 1931, their intervention ceased almost completely in the 1930s (though this was not the case in Cochin).

The missionaries now practically lost all political support from the British authorities. Consequently, the missionaries were obliged to recognize the power and authority of the Maharaja. In 1871, a missionary described Travancore as 'nominally an independent state' while, in 1908, another missionary referred in his book to the Maharaja's 'own administration' and his 'perfect freedom in the management of his own affairs'.⁵ In other words, the missionaries became increasingly amenable to the state. In fact, missionary

⁴Neyoor, 1900, TR, Box 7, CWMA.

⁵Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London: John Snow and Co., 1871), p. 66; I.H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore* (London: H.R. Allenson, 1908), p. 11.

agitations which had been seen, for example, in the case of the abolition of slavery and the breast-cloth controversy in the mid-nineteenth century, almost ceased in the twentieth century. The movements for social equality in the early twentieth century were conducted not by the missionaries but largely by the lower castes themselves.

It was partly due to the change of attitude of the missionaries that the state continued to see the missionaries as more useful than harmful to itself and it was largely for this reason that the relationship between the state and the missionaries did not deteriorate further in the 1910s and 1920s. The state, which had to deal with growing public demands for better educational and health facilities with a limited state revenue, continued to depend on the philanthropy of the missionaries. In addition, the state expected the missionaries to conciliate the low-caste Christians who became increasingly assertive. At the time it was one of the principal concerns of the state to keep the lower castes, Hindu or Christian, obedient to the existing social, economic and political order. To avoid disturbances such as the Mappila rebellion in British Malabar in 1921-22 was certainly one of the greatest concerns of the state in the early twentieth century. In this respect, the missionaries shared much the same view as the state. Thus, P. Rajagopalachari (Dewan, 1907-14) persuaded the low-caste Christians to 'obey the church authorities'.⁶

In the 1930s, however, anti-Christian feelings were widespread among the higher castes, who were greatly influenced by Gandhi's agitations against the missionaries and untouchability. In addition, the Izhavas, one of the largest communities in Travancore, were planning to convert to Christianity or some other religion *en masse*. The state as well as some high-caste Hindus made considerable efforts to hinder the spread of Christianity in the 1930s. The Temple Entry Proclamation was one of the principal results of governmental efforts as well as of, more broadly, social and political changes which greatly affected the relationship between the missionaries, the state and the British authorities.

The relationship between the missionaries, Travancore State and the British authorities was much more complex and fluid than

⁶*Addresses to the Dewan of Travancore, March-May 1914* (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1914), p. 130.

scholars have previously seen it to be. It is true, as Robin Jeffrey has pointed out, that the missionaries aggressively criticized the existing social order and the policy of the Travancore government in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷ But it is equally true that the missionaries were keen to maintain a favourable relationship with Travancore State, and this aspect became much clearer in the twentieth century, when, for a number of administrative, political and social reasons, the missionaries became far more amenable to the state. They not only almost completely ceased to criticize the 'social problems' of Travancore, but also helped the Hindu state to maintain the existing political and economic order. Conversely, Travancore State continued to try to make use of the missionaries and, generally speaking, helped them generously. In the area of medicine in particular, the state and the missionaries maintained a kind of partnership. Previous studies (perhaps because they have identified to a large extent with the missionary perspective) have emphasized missionary involvement in 'social protest and agitation'⁸ and confrontation between the missionaries and the Hindu state, but have paid almost no attention to the changing and multi-faceted nature of the missionaries' role as well as of their relationship with Travancore State.

The relationship between the missionaries and the British authorities also changed very substantially over the period. This change was structural and not merely one caused, as Dick Kooiman has suggested, by a change in the attitude of the British officials in charge.⁹ Similarly, the relationship between Travancore State and the British authorities underwent a fundamental change, and British policy of non-interference, openly declared by Lord Minto, clearly affected the attitude of the British towards Travancore. Some of the principal factors that caused the change were Hindu revivalism, Indian nationalism and the political awakening of a variety of communities, which emerged from the late nineteenth century onwards.

⁷Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), pp. 37-69, 265.

⁸G.A. Oddie, *Social Protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms, 1850-1900* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1979), p. 3.

⁹Dick Kooiman, *Conversion and Social Equality in India: The London Missionary Society in South Travancore in the 19th Century* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989), p. 198.

Meanwhile, similar changes to those in Travancore, such as the emergence of communal movements, affected the society and politics of Cochin State as well. However, as far as the missionaries were concerned, Cochin was very different from Travancore. At least in terms of the number of converts, their activities in Cochin were anything but a success and as a result the relationship between the state and the missionaries was not strained in Cochin. And it was partly for this reason that the introduction of educational and medical reforms was delayed in Cochin as compared to Travancore. In Travancore, as we have seen, many reforms regarding education and the upliftment of the lower castes had to be adopted in practice partly due to competition and compromise with the missionaries.

Finally, anti-Christian or anti-missionary policy prevailed in Travancore in the 1940s largely due to Dewan C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. But it was Syrian Christians who strongly opposed the government policy, and the missionaries, who could not expect any substantial help from the British authorities, had no choice but to accept the situation. Then, the independence of India conclusively deprived the missionaries of a privileged position. Today, the Christians of the former LMS and the CMS belong to the Church of South India, which was inaugurated in 1947 and is now managed by Indians.¹⁰ Travancore and Cochin were united into the secular state of Travancore-Cochin in 1949 and then merged into Kerala State in 1956. Thus, the Maharaja lost his political power as well as his standing as a Hindu prince, though even today the former ruling family plays an important role in some rituals in Kerala. The relationship between the state of Kerala and the Christians, as well as the continuing importance of the former ruling family after independence, are issues for further investigation.

¹⁰Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement towards Union, 1900–1947* (London: Lutterworth, 1965, first edition 1954), p. 399.

Appendix

Rulers, Dewans and British Residents in Travancore and Cochin,
c.1850–1940.

1. Rulers of Travancore

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1729–1758 | Martanda Varma |
| 1758–1798 | Rama Varma |
| 1798–1810 | Bala Rama Varma |
| 1810–1815 | Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bai |
| 1815–1829 | Rani Gouri Parvathi Bai |
| 1829–1847 | Rama Varma (Swathi Tirunal) |
| 1847–1860 | Martanda Varma (Uttaram Tirunal) |
| 1860–1880 | Rama Varma (Ayilliam Tirunal) |
| 1880–1885 | Rama Varma (Visakham Tirunal) |
| 1885–1924 | Rama Varma (Sri Mulam Tirunal) |
| 1924–1931 | Sethu Lakshmi Bai, The Senior Maharani as Regent |
| 1931–1949 | Rama Varma (Sri Chitra Tirunal) |

2. Dewans of Travancore

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1801–1809 | Velu Tampi |
| 1809–1811 | Oommini Tampi |
| 1811–1814 | Colonel John Munro (served concurrently as Resident) |
| 1814–1815 | Dewan Padmanaban |
| 1815–1816 | Shungoo Annavi |
| 1816–1817 | Rama Menon |
| 1817–1822 | Venkata Row, <i>alias</i> Reddy Row |
| 1822–1830 | Venkata Row |
| 1830–1837 | Subba Row |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1837-1838 | R. Ranga Row, Acting |
| 1838-1839 | R.R.R. Venkata Row |
| 1839-1842 | Subba Row |
| 1842-1843 | V. Krishna Row |
| 1843-1845 | Venkata Row, <i>alias</i> Reddy Row |
| 1845-1847 | Sreenivasa Row, in charge |
| 1847-1857 | V. Krishna Row |
| 1857-1872 | Sir T. Madava Row (Acting in 1857) |
| 1872-1877 | Sir Seshiah Sastri |
| 1877-1880 | N. Nanoo Pillay |
| 1880-1887 | V. Ramiengar |
| 1887-1892 | T. Rama Row |
| 1892-1898 | S. Shungarasubbier |
| 1898-1904 | K. Krishnaswamy Row |
| 1904-1906 | V.P. Madhava Rao |
| 1906-1907 | S. Gopalachariyar |
| 1907-1914 | Sir P. Rajagopalachari |
| 1914-1920 | Sir M. Krishnan Nair |
| 1920-1925 | T. Raghaviah, B.A. |
| 1925-1929 | Maurice E. Watts |
| 1929-1932 | V.S. Sabrahmanya Aiyar |
| 1932-1934 | T. Austin, ICS., Barrister-at-law |
| 1934-1936 | Khan Bahadur Nawab Sir Muhammad Habibullah Sahib Bahadur, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E. |
| 1936-1947 | Şachivothama Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, K.C.I.E. |

3. British Residents in Travancore and Cochin

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 1800-1810 | Colonel C. Macaulay |
| 1810-1819 | Colonel J. Munro |
| 1819-1820 | Colonel S. McDonail |
| 1821-1827 | Colonel D. Newall |
| 1827-1829 | Colonel W. Morrison |
| 1829-1834 | Lieut-Colonel E. Cadogan |
| 1834-1836 | J.A. Casamajor |
| 1836-1838 | Colonel J.S. Fraser |
| 1838 | Captain A. Douglas (Acting) |
| 1838-1840 | Lieut-Colonel T. Maclean |
| 1840-1860 | Lieut-General W. Cullen |
| 1860-1862 | F.N. Maltby |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1862-1864 | W. Fisher |
| 1864-1867 | H. Newill |
| 1867 | A. MacGregor (Acting) |
| 1867-1869 | H. Newill |
| 1869-1870 | G.A. Ballard |
| 1870-1871 | J.I. Minchin (Acting) |
| 1871-1874 | G.A. Ballard |
| 1874 | Major A.F.F. Bloomfield (Acting) |
| 1874-1875 | G.A. Ballard |
| 1875 | Major W. Hay (Acting) |
| 1875-1877 | A. MacGregor |
| 1877-1878 | H.E. Sullivan (Acting) |
| 1878-1879 | J.C. Hannington (Acting) |
| 1879-1881 | A. MacGregor |
| 1881-1883 | J.C. Hannington |
| 1883-1884 | W. Logan (Acting) |
| 1884 | R.W. Barlow |
| 1884-1887 | J.C. Hannington |
| 1887 | General Sir H.N.D. Prendergast (Acting) |
| 1887-1890 | J.C. Hannington |
| 1890 | H.B. Grigg |
| 1890-1891 | J.C. Hannington |
| 1891 | H.B. Grigg |
| 1891-1892 | J.C. Hannington |
| 1892-1895 | H.B. Grigg |
| 1895 | J.D. Rees (Acting) |
| 1895-1896 | J. Thomson |
| 1896 | J.D. Rees |
| 1896-1897 | F.A. Nicholson (Acting) |
| 1897-1898 | J.D. Rees |
| 1898-1899 | F.A. Nicholson (Acting) |
| 1899-1904 | G.T. Mackenzie |
| 1904-1906 | James Andrew |
| 1906-1908 | R.C.C. Carr (Acting) |
| 1908-1909 | L. Davidson |
| 1909-1910 | R.C.C. Carr |
| 1910-1912 | A.T. Forbes |
| 1912-1913 | R.A. Graham (Acting) |
| 1913-1915 | A.T. Forbes |
| 1915-1916 | R.A. Graham |

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1916 | A.R. Cunning (Acting) |
| 1916–1917 | H.L. Braidwood |
| 1917–1920 | H.H. Burkitt |
| 1920–1923 | C.W.E. Cotton |

4. Agents to the Governor-General, Madras State

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1923–1926 | C.W.E. Cotton |
| 1926 | H.A.B. Vernon (Acting) |
| 1926–1928 | C.W.E. Cotton |
| 1928–1929 | Lt.Col. C.G. Crosthwaite |
| 1929–1930 | A.N. Ley Cater |
| 1930–1932 | Lt.Col. H.R.N. Pritchard |
| 1932–1935 | Lt.Col. W.A.M. Garstin |

5. Rulers of Cochin

| | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1844–1851 | Rama Varma |
| 1851–1853 | Veera Kerala Varma |
| 1853–1864 | Ravi Varma |
| 1864–1888 | Rama Varma |
| 1888–1895 | Veera Kerala Varma |
| 1895–1914 | Rama Varma |
| 1914–1932 | Rama Varma |
| 1932–1941 | Rama Varma |

6. Dewans of Cochin

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1840–1856 | Sankara Variyar |
| 1856–1860 | Venkata Rau |
| 1860–1879 | T. Sankunni Menon |
| 1879–1889 | Govinda Menon |
| 1889–1892 | C. Tiruvenkatachariar |
| 1892–1896 | V. Subrahmanya Pillai |
| 1896–1901 | P. Rajagopalachari |
| 1901–1902 | S. Locke (Acting) |
| 1902–1907 | N. Pattabhirama Rau |
| 1907–1914 | A.R. Banerji |
| 1914–1919 | J.W. Bhore |

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1919–1922 | T. Vijayaraghava Charya |
| 1922–1925 | P. Narayana Menon |
| 1925–1930 | T.S. Narayana Ayyar |
| 1930–1935 | C.G. Herbert |
| 1935–1941 | Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty |

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